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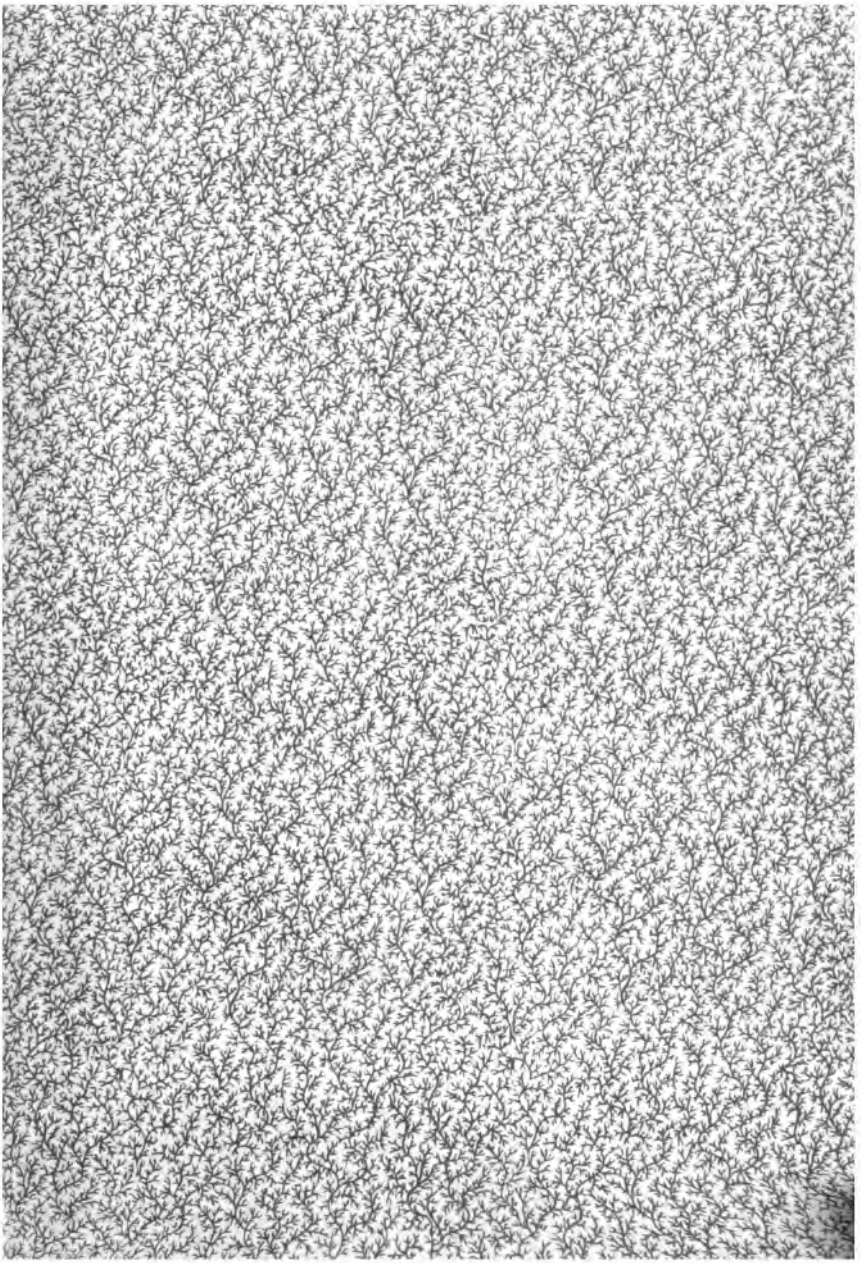

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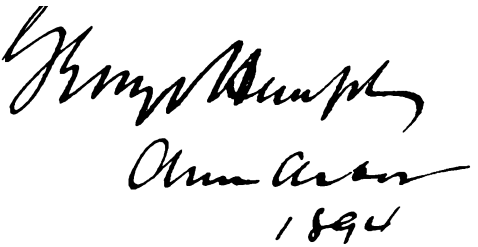
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Dr. George Hempl





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HISTORY

OF THE

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

BY

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PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH IN YALE UNIVERSITY

REVISED AND ENLARGED EDITION



NEW YORK
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1894

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PREFACE TO THE REVISED EDITION.

A REVISED edition of this work has long been desirable on many accounts; it has now become indispensable for reasons purely typographical. The plates from which the previous impressions have been printed are now thoroughly worn out. The present seemed, therefore, a fitting time to subject the work to a complete revision in the light of changes which experience has shown to be advisable, and of modifications and alterations of statement which the advance of knowledge has rendered necessary.

This revision has been carried out on so extensive a scale, and so numerous have been the alterations, that, while the old lines have been followed, the work, as a whole, has almost a right to be termed new. There are comparatively few paragraphs which have not been entirely or partially rewritten. Facts have been restated and passages have been rearranged. Matter found in the previous editions has been discarded, and new matter, which seemed more pertinent, has been substituted in its place. Yet, in spite

of the large number of omissions, so much has been added that the present edition contains above one hundred and fifty pages more than those that have preceded it. There are many other changes which, it is hoped, will conduce to an easier and fuller comprehension of the subject. Certain points which, as experience has proved, were liable to be misapprehended or overlooked by the reader or student, have been brought out more clearly and prominently. A system of cross-references between the two parts and between the different sections of the second part has been carried through on a somewhat extended scale. A large number of illustrative references and quotations have been added. In the limited field, in fact, which the work sets out to cover, no pains have been spared to make it as complete as possible.

The greatest difference, in any single case, between this and the previous editions is in the treatment of the strong verbs in the second part. Still the more important of the changes introduced were introduced on the score of expediency. In this country Sievers's *Angelsächsische Grammatik*, or the Sievers-Cook "Old English Grammar," is the grammar of our earliest speech which is now in widest use. It was therefore deemed better to conform the classification of the strong verbs to that employed in those works, and to bring it in accord with them, a change was made in the number and arrangement previously adopted. In addition, the details belonging to the different classes of strong verbs have been largely brought

together in this edition under each class, and not, as before, distributed under different titles.

As regards the subject of nomenclature, I have seen no reason to alter essentially that which was employed in the previous editions. On one point in particular, action has not been taken unadvisedly. I have examined with care everything accessible on the subject, and, I think, nearly everything that has been published, and the more I have read, the less I have been impressed with the force of the arguments against the use of the term "Anglo-Saxon." I have therefore retained it in this work, as furnishing what is all-important in nomenclature, a term which, once understood, can never be misunderstood. It is very noticeable that those who are most violently opposed to its use, not unfrequently resort to it when they wish to define with absolute precision what they mean when they apply the term "Old English" to a particular period in the history of the language. There are, indeed, advantages and disadvantages connected with any terminology that may be adopted. It is certainly an argument in favor of the designation as Old English of what is here called Anglo-Saxon, that it makes prominent the continuity of our speech. It is an objection to it that, besides the inevitable ambiguity of the epithet 'old,' it suggests wrong ideas as to the nature of that continuity. Still it would be folly to attach importance to this particular subject. It is only those who magnify matters of minor consequence that will consider the question as one of much moment. I have,

accordingly, taken pains to furnish the student with a precise account of that other one of the numerous terminologies proposed or used, which is now preferred by many.

It is hardly necessary to be observed that this work does not set out to be a treatise on usage. Yet it is inevitable that many questions connected with that subject should come up constantly in a description of the history of inflection. Hence a place is necessarily found in these pages for the explanation of the origin of various and varying peculiarities of expression, as, for instance, that of double plurals of the nouns like *folk* and *folks*, *memorandums* and *memoranda;* of participial forms like *gotten* and *got*, *proved* and *proven;* of phrases and constructions such as *it is me*, *you was*, *he dare*, *between you and I*, *the house is being built*, and, in fine, of a long list of locutions, the propriety of which is made a matter of constant contention.

So far, in truth, as regards one particular branch of usage, this work may be fairly called complete. There are no anomalous grammatical forms belonging to the speech which are not here recorded, with an account given of their origin. The exact history of these will answer decisively numerous questions of disputed usage which can be answered in no other way. In order to have the work as serviceable as possible in this particular, the indexes have been made exceedingly full, wherever points of this kind are concerned.

At the same time, in tracing the history of these

disputed forms and phrases, I have not attempted to lay down what in my opinion ought to be, but simply to point out what is, and how it came to be what it is. My aim has been to furnish a trustworthy guide, to which any one in doubt about the propriety of a particular form can go, with the assurance that he can find accurate and definite information that will enable him to comprehend clearly the arguments for and against its use, and will put him in a position to settle for himself in any given instance on which side the weight of authority lies. On certain points, indeed, the evidence is so entirely one-sided that no course is open save to pronounce an opinion in accordance with it. But this is rarely the fact. Usually the evidence is conflicting, and in such instances the most that can safely be said, in summing up, is that the present tendency of the language is to prefer one of two disputed forms or expressions — which is something quite different, however, from saying that the other form or expression is wrong. A scientific treatise has no business to set up as a standard of authority the preferences of particular persons: and in this matter diligent effort has been put forth to separate the facts of language from the fancies, the prejudices, and the theories of individuals, including those of the author himself.

It it perhaps desirable, even if not absolutely necessary, to repeat the statement made in the preface to the previous editions, that the division of the history into two parts has involved in some instances

the necessity of going over the same ground. In no case, however, will this be found to be mere repetition. And, while the second part has been more particularly prepared for the special student, it is hoped that there is nothing in it which will present any difficulty to any reader of ordinary intelligence who cares to investigate the subject.

In conclusion, in expressing my obligations to many who have aided me in the revision of this work, I am bound to acknowledge my special indebtedness to my colleague, Prof. Albert S. Cook, who in all cases of doubt and difficulty, especially in connection with the earliest period of the speech, has invariably given me the benefit of his intimate acquaintance with the language of that time. From many others, too numerous to be mentioned by name, I have received help in this revision, either in the way of suggestion, or of criticism. There is, in truth, nothing more encouraging for the future of English scholarship in this country than the existence of so many enthusiastic students of our early language and literature, who are engaged in making special investigations of their own, and who never fail to communicate to those under their instruction a portion of their own zeal. I can ask no better fortune for the revised edition of this work, than that to some slight extent it may be as helpful to them as the results of their labors have often been to me.

T. R. Lounsbury.

New Haven, Jan. 15, 1894.

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West-Saxon Earldom
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Orkney
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Man
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DEIRA
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Peakland
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ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

LANGUAGES ALLIED TO THE ENGLISH.

THE most superficial student of speech is well acquainted with the fact that English is no isolated, independent tongue, but one of the members of a vast family, embracing languages far removed from one another, both in time and in space. This family occupied, at an early period, large districts of Asia, and nearly the whole of Europe; and during the last four hundred years its domain has been extended still farther, over a great portion of the habitable globe. Various names have been employed to designate it as a whole. Of these the ones in most common use are Indo-Germanic, Indo-European, and Aryan, especially the last two.

Every one of the Indo-European languages is more or less closely related to every other by the fact of descent from a common mother-tongue. Of this common mother-tongue no literary monuments of

any sort have been handed down; nor is the place known where it was originally spoken, nor the time when. Its earliest home has, indeed, been ascribed with much positiveness to various regions, both in Asia and in Europe. But for any such special assignment there has never been furnished any satisfactory proof; hardly, in fact, anything that can be deemed evidence.

This only we can say, that, at some remote periods of the past, members of the race that spoke the primitive Indo-European speech, or later descendants of it, parted company from one another, wandered in various directions, and finally formed permanent settlements far apart. Lapse of time and separation in space caused differences to spring up between these dispersed communities,— differences in customs, in beliefs, and, what most concerns us here, in language. The divergences that arose became, in the course of events, so much more important and conspicuous than the resemblances which had been preserved, that, when the scattered races and peoples that had sprung from this one primitive Indo-European tribe appear in recorded history as coming into contact with one another, they are totally unaware of the tie of blood or of speech that subsists between them. Nor was the fact of this relationship established by modern scholars until within the past hundred years.

The scientific study which has been carried on in the present century of the languages of the Indo-European family shows that in all branches of it there

is a certain number of grammatical forms which bear a resemblance to each other so close that the conclusion is inevitable that they must have come from a common source. The same assertion can be made as to certain words found in all these tongues, especially personal pronouns, numerals, and nouns denoting the family relation. These are even more than proofs of a common descent. The common existence of these forms and words in languages far apart in space and time makes it clear that they must have belonged to the speech of the primitive Indo-European community before its dispersion into separate ones. From it they must have been transmitted to all its descendants. By a comparison of the forms and words thus preserved in the derived languages, it has been possible to construct a theoretical primitive language, which is the remote parent of every tongue included in this family.

Bound to each other, therefore, by the fact of common descent, all Indo-European tongues necessarily are; but it likewise follows that the relationship existing between some is much closer than that between others. According to the nearness of this relationship among themselves, the languages of the Indo-European stock have been divided into the following distinct branches: —

I. The Indian. — This embraces the languages of Northern Hindostan. Its great representative is the Sanskrit. In its earliest form this goes back to about two thousand years before the Christian era, and

about three centuries before that epoch, it died out as a spoken tongue. It is the oldest of all the languages of the Indo-European family, and as a whole comes nearest to the primitive speech.

II. The Iranian. — This is so called from Iran, the ancient name of the country from Kurdistan to Afghanistan. The two ancient tongues belonging to it are the Persian of the cuneiform or arrow-headed inscriptions, and the so-called Zend, the language of the Avesta, the Bible of the Parsis of Western India. The principal existing representative is the modern Persian, with a literature dating from about the tenth century.

III. The Hellenic. — This is so called from the Hellenes, the inhabitants of Hellas, the names by which the Greeks have always designated themselves and their country. This branch includes the ancient Greek, with its various dialects, the Æolic, the Doric, the Ionic, and in particular the Attic, which became at last the common language. Its existing representative is the Romaic or Modern Greek.

IV. The Slavonic, or Slavo-Lettic. — This includes the languages spoken over a large portion of Eastern Europe. Of this branch the Russian is much the most important. The Russian belongs to the Eastern division, of which the most ancient tongue is the Bulgarian. The principal languages of the Western division are the Polish and the Bohemian. Another group, called the Lettish or Lithuanic, embracing dialects spoken about the Baltic, is sometimes reckoned as a distinct branch of the Indo-European family.

With none of these has the English any intimate relationship, though from the ancient Greek it has borrowed a moderately large number of words. With the three remaining branches its connections are nearer, though varying in their nature. With the first it has come into close geographical contact; from the second it has taken full half of its literary vocabulary; of the third it is itself a member.

V. The Celtic. — This branch was once widely spread over Western Europe; but it is now confined to portions of the British Isles, and to the peninsula of Brittany in North-western France. It is divided into the two following clearly defined groups: —

1st, The Cymric. To this belong the languages or dialects once used throughout the whole of England and Southern Scotland, but now limited to the principality of Wales, and represented in it by the tongue we call the Welsh. There is one other living tongue besides the Welsh. This is the Breton, spoken in the peninsula of Brittany just mentioned, and sometimes called Armorican from Armorica, the ancient name of that region. This language has a close affinity with the third member of the group, the Cornish, once the speech of the extreme south-west of Great Britain, but which died out entirely in the eighteenth century.

2d, The Gadhelic or Goidelic. Of this group the most important member is the Erse or Irish, the native language of Ireland. Two other tongues belong to it — the Gaelic, spoken in parts of the Scottish

Highlands, and the Manx, spoken by a portion of the population of the Isle of Man.

The Celtic tongues are all dying out, in some places slowly, in others rapidly. In the British Isles they are giving way to the encroachments of the English, and in France to that of the French. Linguistically they are widely removed from our speech, and, in spite of their geographical nearness, have had no influence worth speaking of on its vocabulary, and none at all on its grammar.

VI. The Italic. — The Latin is the great representative of all the ancient languages included in this branch, and is the parent of all the modern ones belonging to it. These latter are collectively called Romanic or Romance. They are descended from the Latin spoken by the common people (*lingua Latina rustica*), which was in several particulars different from the Latin that has been handed down in literature. Between the two numerous variations early existed, and these continued to increase during the last centuries of the Roman Empire of the West. These differences were in pronunciation, in vocabulary, and in inflection. As regards the last, the six cases of the classical Latin were, in this tongue of the common people, largely reduced in number. Forms of the verbs also fell away. Finally from this corrupt popular speech were successively developed between the tenth and thirteenth centuries the five literary languages of Western Europe, — the French and the Provençal, the Spanish and the Portuguese,

and the Italian. The use of French was at first confined to Northern France; while Provençal, or the Languedoc, was the speech of the South of that country. The latter, during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries especially, flourished as a language of literature, and in it was then composed the poetry of the troubadours. But the political preponderance of Northern France carried with it the supremacy of the tongue spoken in it; and the Provençal sank from the position of a cultivated language to that of a dialect.

In various parts of South-eastern Europe there also survives a descendant of the Latin, the most important dialect of which is the Roumanian. This is spoken in the provinces of Wallachia and Moldavia, constituting the present kingdom of Roumania, and also in certain adjacent portions of the Austrian Empire. The vocabulary of this tongue has been largely affected by the languages with which it has come into contact, and especially has there been a large admixture of Slavonic words. During the present century it has begun to attain some prominence as a language of literature. Still another descendant of the Latin is a popular speech, which may be roughly described as used by scattered communities from Friuli in North-eastern Italy to the Grisons in South-eastern Switzerland. It is broken up into a number of dialects, but is sometimes called as a whole the Ladino. To it is also given the name of Rhæto-Romanic, from the ancient Roman province

of Rhætia — a term which is often specifically applied to the dialect of it spoken in Switzerland.

The influence of the Italic branch upon English has been very great so far as regards vocabulary. This is especially true of the classical Latin and of the French. Italian and Spanish have also contributed a limited number of terms. The Latin and Romance elements in our tongue, owing to circumstances connected with its history, make up fully one-half of the number of words used in literature, though the grammar of English has been but slightly affected by any of the languages of this stock.

VII. The Teutonic. — Of this branch, which is termed by some the Germanic, English may be justly called the most important member. As we have no remains of the primitive Indo-European, so we have none of the primitive Teutonic speech, from which all the modern tongues have descended. The branch is now usually divided into two classes, the East-Germanic and the West-Germanic. Proof of the closeness of the relationship existing between the members of the East-Germanic division has not been made out so clearly as that which exists between the members of the West-Germanic; but the classification now common will be followed here, and in accordance with it a detailed description of groups and individual languages will be given.

I. To the East-Germanic class belong: —

1. *The Gothic.* — This was the tongue spoken by the Goths who dwelt in the Roman province of

Mœsia on the Lower Danube. Hence it is sometimes called the Mœso-Gothic. It is the eldest of the Teutonic tongues that have handed down memorials of their existence, and naturally is much the most ancient in its forms. It stands, indeed, in the same relation to the other members of this branch that the Sanskrit does to all the members of the Indo-European family. Its principal literary monument is only partially preserved. This was a translation of the Bible made in the fourth century into the language of the Goths of Mœsia, by Ulfilas, their bishop. The speech died out in the ninth century, and has left no descendants.

2. *The Scandinavian, or Norse.* — The oldest representative of this group is the Old Norse, or, as it is sometimes called, the Old Icelandic. To Iceland it was carried in the ninth century by settlers from Norway, and there gave birth to a brilliant literature. The modern Scandinavian tongues are the Icelandic, the Swedish, the Danish, and the Norwegian.

II. To the West-Germanic class belong: —

1. *The High German.* — This is so called because originally spoken in Upper or Southern Germany; though the modern literary High German represents as well the tongues spoken in Midland Germany. The history of the dialects belonging to it is divided into three periods. The first is that of the Old High German, extending from the eighth to the twelfth century. The second period is that of Middle High German, extending from the twelfth to the

sixteenth century. Its literature is very abundant in quantity, and rich in quality. The New High German begins with the writings of the reformer Luther, in the first half of the sixteenth century, especially with his translation of the Bible. It is the language of all modern German literature, and is usually termed by us simply the German.

Next follows a group of tongues, which as spoken by the dwellers of Northern or Lower Germany, is commonly called the Low Germanic. To this group belong the following: —

2. The Low Frankish, which was spoken principally in the Netherlands, and hence during portions of its history has been called the Netherlandish. It is now represented by the Dutch of Holland, and the Flemish spoken in portions of Belgium. The Flemish, as a literary language, is essentially a dialect of the Dutch.

3. The Old Saxon, which may roughly be described as having been spoken in the region between the Rhine and the Elbe, though not in the extreme North. Its principal monument is a poem of the ninth century, written in alliterative verse, and entitled the Hēliand, or 'Healer.' As regards its subject, it is a life of Christ based upon the four gospels. The modern representative of this tongue is the Platt Deutsch, sometimes called simply Low German. This is the speech of the peasantry of Northern Germany, and extends with decided dialectic variations from the Rhine to Pomerania. The

predominance of High German has prevented any general development of it as a language of literature, but many works have been written in it, among which the poems and tales of Fritz Reuter (1810–1874) are especially noteworthy.

4. The Frisian, or Friesic, which was spoken in the narrow strip of coast north of the territory occupied by the Old Saxon, and in the adjacent islands. It is now much more restricted in space, being limited to a few country districts on the mainland and to a few islands along the coast. Its earliest monuments are a collection of laws, contracts, and official documents which go back no farther than the fourteenth or fifteenth centuries. At the present time it exists only as a popular speech, though attempts have been made of late to cultivate it as a literary language.

5. Closely allied to the Frisian is the Saxon or English, which is the most important of the whole group. In the fifth and sixth centuries it was carried to Great Britain by the Saxons and Angles. There it had a history, and developed a literature peculiarly its own. The earliest form of it is commonly designated by modern writers as Anglo-Saxon, or Old English.

There are several other families of speech found over the earth, but so far no evidence of relationship has been shown to exist between any of them and the Indo-European. One of the most important of these is the Semitic. It is so called because it was once

assumed that the peoples who spoke the tongues belonging to it were the descendants of Shem, the eldest son of Noah; and for a similar reason the term Japhetic has occasionally been applied to the Indo-European. To the Semitic family belong among others, Assyrian, Syrian, Phœnician, Hebrew, and Arabic. There is still another family called variously the Turanian, or the Tartaric, or the Scythian, which includes among its members the tongues spoken by the Finns, the Hungarians, and the Turks. But though our speech has borrowed words from some of these languages, and from languages belonging to still other families, between it and any one of them no trace of the slightest real connection can be discovered.

As contrasted with these, English can therefore be spoken of with sufficient accuracy as a member of the Indo-European family of languages. As contrasted with its numerous related tongues, it is more specifically to be described as a member of the Low Germanic group of the Teutonic branch of that family. Its history, like that of all other tongues, naturally divides itself into two parts. The first embraces what, for lack of a better term, may be called its general history; that is, the account of the circumstances and conditions under which it developed its present form, of the external agencies that operated upon it, especially of the social and political influences that affected it, that modified it, and that, in particular, changed the character of its vocabulary, and

transformed it from an inflectional speech into one nearly non-inflectional. The second is the history of the internal changes which took place within the language itself. It is obvious at a glance that the latter is a far more intricate and extensive subject than the former. It embraces, indeed, a vast variety of subjects, the full consideration of any one of which would require a separate volume. This work will treat of so much only of this internal history as is concerned with the variations of form that have taken place in the noun, the adjective, the pronoun, and the verb, caused by change or loss of inflection. Some notice will necessarily be taken, in addition, of the steps which the language has resorted to in order to increase its resources, and to repair the losses it has sustained, either by the development of forms entirely new, or the application of old forms to new uses. This is but a small portion of the immense field which must be covered in any full account of the interior growth and development of our speech; but beyond these limits there will, in this treatise, be no attempt to go.




MAP OF
ENGLAND
Scale of Miles
0 10 20 30 40 50 60
SCOTLAND
EDINBURGH
Firth of Clyde
Donaghadee
NORTH CHANNEL
Solway Firth
Berwick
NORTHUMBERLAND
Tyne
Newcastle
Carlisle
Durham
DURHAM
Hartlepool
CUMBERLAND
Appleby
WEST-MORELAND
R. Tees
R. Ouse
Scarborough
Flamborough Hd.
I. of Man
Lancaster
Morecambe Bay
YORK
York
Leeds
Bradford
Hull
R. Humber
IRISH SEA
NORTH SEA
Birkenhead
Liverpool
Manchester
Sheffield
ANGLESEY
Holy Island
6
4
2
0
2
56
54


Cardigan Bay
ST. GEORGE'S C.
Dolgelly
MONT-GOMERY
Montgomery
Cardigan
CARDIGAN
RADNOR
New Radnor
HEREFORD
Hereford
SHROP.
WORCESTER
Worcester
WARWICK
Warwick
LEICESTER
Leicester
NORTHAMPTON
Northampton
Norwich
SUFFOLK
Ipswich
Cambridge
BEDFORD
HUNTINGDON
HERTFORD
ESSEX
Chelmsford
St.Davids
PEMBROKE
Pembroke
CAERMARTHEN
Caermarthen
BRECKNOCK
Brecknock
Monmouth
GLOUCESTER
Gloucester
Oxford
OXFORD
BUCKINGHAM
Buckingham
GLAMORGAN
Swansea
Cardiff
BRISTOL CHANNEL
Bristol
Bath
WILTSHIRE
BERKSHIRE
Reading
Guildford
SURREY
KENT
Maidstone
Dover
Hartland Pt.
SOMERSET
Salisbury
Winchester
Southampton
Chichester
SUSSEX
Hastings
Brighton
Calais
Boulogne
Strait of Dover
Launceston
DEVON
Exeter
DORSET
Dorchester
HANTSHIRE
Portsmouth
Lof Wight
Portland Bill
CORNWALL
Plymouth
Lands End
Falmouth
Lizard Hd.
ENGLISH CHANNEL
FRANCE
Cherbourg
52
50
4
Longitude West
2
from Greenwich
0
East
Fisk & Co., N.Y.

PART I.

GENERAL HISTORY.

CHAPTER I.

THE ROMAN AND THE TEUTONIC CONQUEST OF BRITAIN.

THE English tongue is at the present time the speech of communities scattered over all the globe; but its history as a language is almost wholly confined to the island of Great Britain. There it was that the violent changes which took place in the social and political condition of the people were indirectly followed by as violent changes in the character and grammatical structure of the words they spoke. Without an adequate knowledge of the former, no one can gain a satisfactory conception of the latter. The Celts, the Romans, the Saxons, the Northmen, and the French have met or succeeded one another upon British soil; and the occupation of the country by each has left ineffaceable records of itself in the tongue we use to-day. But English was not the original speech of the island. In the modern form in which we know it, it can, indeed, hardly lay claim to a higher age than five hundred years. It is, therefore, quite as important to understand clearly what English is not, as well as what it is.

The Roman Conquest. — Great Britain can hardly be said to be known to history until a short time before the Christian era. Our first positive information in regard to it we owe to Julius Cæsar, who, after his conquest of Gaul, turned his attention to the island, and twice invaded it,— once in 55 B.C., and again in the following year. He found there a people allied in blood and speech to the one he had just brought under Roman sway, and both belonging to the race called Celtic, then widely spread over Western Europe. It was the Cymric branch of this family, now represented in Great Britain by the Welsh, that had possession of most of the island; and it was with this that Cæsar came into contact. His success was rather nominal than real; for though he marched a little way into the interior, and exacted the payment of a tribute, he seems, in the words of Tacitus, to have handed down to posterity the discovery of the country rather than its possession.

For nearly a hundred years after Cæsar's invasion, Great Britain remained unmolested by the Romans. But in the reign of the Emperor Claudius a renewed attempt at conquest began in A.D. 42, and was kept up without intermission till near the close of the first century. By that time the reduction of the island was accomplished as far as the Forth. Beyond that the invaders never gained anything but a temporary foothold. A wall extending for about forty miles across the narrow interval between the friths of Forth and of Clyde marked the extreme northern limit of the permanent Roman occupation.

With the conquest of the greater portion of the island the Romans began that energetic administration, which, in the case of Gaul and Spain, ended in making the native inhabitants of those countries as Latin as the inhabitants of Italy itself. Colonies were established, towns were fortified, military roads were constructed. With their laws and customs, the invaders introduced also their language and literature. These last early became popular. We have the statement of Tacitus that Agricola, the Roman governor of Britain from 78 to 84 A.D., caused the sons of the principal chiefs to be instructed in the liberal arts; and that, as a result of this policy, those who had previously disdained the Latin language sought to gain the ability to speak it fluently. Later in 100 A.D., the epigrammatist Martial was able to boast that even Britain was said to recite his poems.

The attention paid to Latin literature and the employment of the Latin tongue must indeed have steadily increased during the more than three hundred years in which the Romans occupied the island. Yet, however widely that speech was then used, it manifestly never made its way in Britain as it did in Gaul and Spain. It was without doubt chiefly confined to the educated classes and to the dwellers in cities; for, with the withdrawal of the Romans in the early part of the fifth century, their language disappeared almost as completely. But slight vestiges of it are to be found in the Welsh, the present representative of the tongue then spoken by most of the native

inhabitants of the island. Even if a few words thus derived can be discovered, there is not perhaps a single one of them that has passed directly from this source over into the English tongue.

Traces of the Roman occupation are, indeed, to be found in names of towns. That the *-coln* of Lincoln is due to *colonia* is perhaps doubtful; but the Latin *castra*, 'camp,' is certainly preserved in the names of a large number of places ending in *-caster*, *-cester*, and *-chester*, as Lancaster, Worcester, and Winchester. Likewise the word 'street,' which is merely the first word of *strata via*, 'paved way,' may have come to us in consequence of the Teutonic invaders hearing the term first applied by the Britons to the Roman military roads; but this is doubtful, for the same term appears very early in all the Teutonic dialects. It is possible that one or two other words may have been derived in this way from this source; but it is evident that the Latin of the Roman occupation exercised no appreciable influence upon the English speech properly so called. Still, as the Roman names of towns have been retained to this day, to the words denoting these is often given the title of "Latin of the First Period."

The Teutonic Conquest. — Up to this time, English was not known in the island. It was to the Teutonic invasion, which followed soon after the Roman occupation ceased, that we owe the introduction of our language into Great Britain, and the gradual displacement of the Celtic tongues.

The story of this Teutonic invasion and conquest is in many respects obscure and uncertain; but, while numerous details may be mythical rather than historical, the general statement cannot be far from the truth. The common account runs somewhat as follows: Of the western provinces of the Roman Empire, Great Britain was the last to be conquered, the first to be abandoned. Its inhabitants were left, in the first half of the fifth century, exposed to the attacks of the dwellers in the northern part of the island, the Picts and Scots, who had never been really subdued, and whose incursions had always been, from the time of the first conquest, a source of annoyance and alarm. In their extremity the wretched population called for aid upon certain Teutonic tribes dwelling upon the north coast of Germany. It was by these the English language was brought into Great Britain; for the new auxiliaries did not long remain contented with the limited territory which had been assigned them, but, soon turning their arms against their allies, ended at last in conquering the country they came to save.

This invasion is said to have begun about the middle of the fifth century. It is more than probable, to be sure, that, previous to this time, Teutonic bands had made marauding descents upon the coast; it is not impossible that they had formed scattered settlements. About the end of the fourth century one of the Roman military officers stationed in Britain was styled "Count of the Saxon Frontier" (*Comes Limitis Saxonici per Britanniam*); and his jurisdic-

tion extended from the Wash to Southampton. This stretch of coast may have been called the Saxon Frontier because Saxons inhabited it: the more reasonable assumption is that it was so called because the Saxons molested it.

Names of the Teutonic Invading Tribes, and Kingdoms founded by them. — The Teutonic invaders were Low Germans, and belonged to three tribes,— the Jutes, the Saxons, and the Angles. According to the dates furnished by the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, Hengist and Horsa came over in 449 with a body of Jutes, and subsequently founded the kingdom of Kent. They also occupied the Isle of Wight. In 477 Ælla landed near the present city of Chichester, and founded the kingdom of the South Saxons, or Sussex. This, roughly speaking, includes the present counties of Surrey and Sussex. In 495 Cerdic came over, and in 519 founded the kingdom of the West Saxons, or Wessex. This by successive conquests came finally to include nearly all South-west England, with a portion of the country north of the upper waters of the Thames. There were also Saxons north of the Thames, occupying the present counties of Essex and Middlesex.

Sussex, Wessex, and Essex are usually spoken of as the three Saxon monarchies. There were likewise kingdoms founded by the Angles. Their collective territory embraced much the larger part of Great Britain, but their origin is wrapped in even deeper obscurity than that of the others. The largest of

these was the kingdom of Northumbria, which extended from the Humber to the Forth, and consequently included the greater portion of the Scottish Lowlands. We know nothing of its early history. The establishment of its monarchy is ascribed to the year 547, under which date the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle states that "Ida came to the throne, from whom sprang the royal race of the Northumbrians." It was frequently divided into the two kingdoms of Deira and Bernicia. The former extended from the Humber to the Tees, and was about the same as the present county of York. The latter stretched from the Tees to the Frith of Forth.

Besides Northumbria, there was the kingdom of East Anglia, which included the modern Norfolk and Suffolk (the *North-folk* and the *South-folk*), and parts of other counties. The last Anglian kingdom to be formed was that of Mercia,— the "March," or frontier. This in process of time came to be one of the largest, and to embrace most of the central counties of England. These seven monarchies are often popularly but loosely spoken of as the Heptarchy.

From the account just given, it appears that the Teutonic conquest of Great Britain was chiefly the work of two tribes,— the Saxons and the Angles. It further appears that the former settled mainly in the southern part of the island; while the latter occupied the centre and north of England and the Lowlands of Scotland. The Angles had a marked superiority, both in their numbers, and in the extent of territory

they occupied. When, therefore, any characteristic differences that may have originally existed between the tribes began to disappear, and the two peoples blended in one, it is no matter of wonder that the name of the larger body should be taken to designate the country the two possessed in common. *Englisc*, 'English,' was the title usually given, after the ninth century, to the race and language. *Englaland* (contracted, *England*), 'land of the Angles,' came later to be the name applied to the whole country from the Channel to the Frith of Forth.

But, though the Angles were the more numerous, the Saxons seem to have been the first to come into contact with the native population; for it was the title which the conquered race gave to all the invaders. Even to this day, to the Celtic inhabitant of the British Isles, whether Cymric or Gadhelic, the Englishman is not an Englishman, but a Saxon or Sassenach. It is not improbable, therefore, that this tribe made the earliest marauding descents upon the entire length of coast. On the other hand, the invaders spoke of the native population sometimes as Britons, sometimes as Welsh (A. S. *Welisc*, *Welsc*, 'foreign,' from A. S. *Wealh*, a 'foreigner').

Rise of the Kingdom of Wessex. — The conquest of the country was no rapid or easy task. The native population resisted fiercely, and gave way slowly. Every accession of territory was gained at the cost of hard fighting. Still, under incessant attacks, the Britons were steadily, though slowly, pushed back

towards the western shore of the island; and at the beginning of the ninth century the portion of country directly under their sway was limited to the present county of Cornwall (West Wales), to the present principality of Wales (North Wales), and to a strip along the north-western coast of England and south-western coast of Scotland.

But the invaders were not only constantly fighting the native Celtic inhabitants, they were as constantly engaged in hostilities among themselves. As a result, the size and the number of the various kingdoms they founded were constantly changing. With the accession, however, in 802, of Egbert to the throne of Wessex, the kingdom of the West Saxons became the ruling one,—a supremacy which it never after lost. Before the death of that monarch, which took place in 839, his authority was acknowledged by all the invaders that had settled in Great Britain, and was submitted to by the people of West and of North Wales. In the following century, during the reigns of Edward the Elder (901–925) and Athelstan (925–940), the son and grandson of Alfred the Great (871–901), the power of the house of Wessex became permanently established over the whole island; and the kings of that line were recognized as immediate lords of all the English inhabitants, and as superior lords of all the Celtic. At this point the Teutonic conquest of Britain may be said to have been fully achieved.

CHAPTER II.

THE ANGLO-SAXON LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE.

Language of the Teutonic Invaders. — Up to the accession of Egbert, the speech of the Teutonic invaders of Britain, while doubtless the same essentially, was broken up into a number of dialects. None of these, except, possibly, the Northumbrian, possessed what we should term a literature. The Latin charters of the early kings in several places make distinct mention of the dialect of Kent; but in that no literary work of any extent was then composed, or, if composed, it has not been handed down in its original form. Still the few monuments of the early speech that have been preserved enable us to recognize, before the end of the eighth century, the existence of four principal dialects. Two of them are Anglian — the Mercian and the Northumbrian, which were spoken throughout the region north of the Thames to the furthest limit of the Teutonic occupation of what is now Scotland. The other two, spoken mainly south of the Thames, were the West-Saxon and the Kentish.

It is not likely that any one of these four dialects possessed originally any authority outside of its own

district. With the accession, however, of the royal house of Wessex to the rule of Teutonic England, this condition of things underwent a change. Linguistic supremacy, other things being equal, is sure to follow political: the dialect of Wessex, accordingly, became the cultivated language of the whole people,— the language in which books were written and laws were published. During the reign of Alfred (871–901) it began to develop a literature, which, before the Norman Conquest, attained no slight proportions. It is in this West-Saxon dialect that nearly all the existing monuments of our earliest speech were composed, or, it would be more correct to say, have been preserved. Still, besides these, we have extant a few interlinear glosses — that is, translations inserted between the lines — written in the language of Northumbria, the parent-tongue of the present dialects of the North of England and of the Scottish Lowlands.

The language of the Teutonic invaders was originally called by them Saxon or English, according as they themselves were Saxons or Angles. It continued, even down to the eleventh century, to be thus variously designated in their own Latin writings. Still the superiority of the Angles, arising from vastly greater numbers, from larger territory, and perhaps from an earlier cultivation of literature, eventually, and to all appearance speedily, made the name belonging to them predominant. It survived the decay of their political power. Though the kings of the West Saxons attained to the supremacy; though

Winchester, the West-Saxon capital, became the capital of the whole country; though the West-Saxon dialect became the language of all who wrote, the name applied both to the race and the tongue was usually *Englisc*, that is, 'English.' From the ninth century on, it is the only term applied to it by those who wrote in it. When, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, a revival of the study of our early speech took place, it was sometimes called Saxon, sometimes English-Saxon, and sometimes Anglo-Saxon. The last designation, as recognizing the names of the two principal invading tribes, has been until recently the one generally adopted. By many it is now styled Old English. In this work Anglo-Saxon will be used to mark a period in the history of the English language extending from 450 to 1150, or nearly a century after the Norman Conquest; and, when employed without limitation, will designate that dialect of it called specifically the West-Saxon. As an equivalent phrase, "English of the Anglo-Saxon period" will also be used.

Differences between Anglo-Saxon and Modern English. — Both in grammar and in vocabulary Anglo-Saxon differed widely from Modern English. It was what, in the technical language of grammarians, is called a synthetic language; that is, a language, like the Latin, which expresses by changes in the form of the words themselves, the modifications of meaning they undergo, and their relations to one another in the sentence. It had two principal declensions of

the noun, with several subordinate declensions under one of them.[1] It had two declensions of the adjective, according as its substantive was to be represented as definite or indefinite.[2] It had a distinct form for four cases in the substantive. It had two leading conjugations of the verb, with subordinate conjugations under each.[3] As a necessary accompaniment of this fulness of inflection, it possessed in comparison with the present tongue, a somewhat complicated syntax. On the other hand, Modern English is what is called an analytic language. The relations of ideas which were once expressed by termination and inflection are now, with the disappearance of these, expressed, instead, by the use of prepositions and their cases, and by the arrangement of words in the sentence. Still the grammatical structure, what there is left of it, is purely Teutonic.

Even more marked is the difference between the ancient and the modern tongue in the vocabulary. A vast number of words belonging to the Anglo-Saxon no longer exist for us, even in a changed form. The places of these have been supplied by borrowing from other languages, especially from Latin and French. This has been carried on to an extent which, if vocabulary alone were considered, would make it doubtful whether our tongue is Teutonic or Romanic.

Anglo-Saxon Literature. — Poetry. — The Teutonic invaders were originally heathen, and no written

[1] See Part II. secs. 24, 25, and 27.
[2] Ib. secs. 69–73. [3] Ib. secs. 152–156.

literature existed among them before their conversion to Christianity. This took place in the seventh century. Of the dialects of Anglo-Saxon, the West-Saxon is the only one that has handed down productions of any literary value, though many and perhaps most of them were pretty certainly composed originally in the Northumbrian. They consist of a number of works, both in prose and poetry. The latter, as in all early literatures, was much the more important, and presents a marked contrast, alike in character and construction, to the verse of later times. Its distinguishing peculiarity, as regards form, was, that it was alliterative; that is to say, it depended, not upon final rhyme, nor upon regularity of accent, nor upon the existence of a fixed number of syllables in the line, but upon the fact that a certain number of the more important words in the same line began with the same letter. According to the usual, though not invariable, arrangement, two principal words in the first section of the line, and one in the second section, began with the same letter, if a consonant. If words beginning with vowels were employed, the vowels were not required to be the same. Unaccented prefixes were not regarded, as the *ge* in *ge-wāt* of the following illustration of this method of versification: —

Ge-*w*āt þā ofer *w*ǣg-holm · *w*inde ge-fȳsed
*F*lota *f*āmig-heals · *f*ugle gelīcost.

*W*ent then over the sea-*w*ave, *w*ind-impelled,
The *b*oat with *b*ow of foam, likest a *b*ird.

As regards subject, Anglo-Saxon poetry was mainly of a religious character. To a large extent it consisted of versifications of the narratives contained in the Bible, and of legends of saints and martyrs. Still its most important work is the epic of "Bēowulf," which celebrates the deeds of a Scandinavian hero of that name. This exists in only a single imperfect manuscript of the tenth century; but the original composition of the poem is thought by many to go back to the period before the conversion of the people to Christianity. The next most important work is a version of some of the Bible narratives, generally attributed to Cædmon, a Northumbrian monk who flourished in the middle of the seventh century. But if these were his composition, they have not been preserved in the form in which they were written; for it is not in the Northumbrian, but in the West-Saxon dialect that they now exist. Another poet of this early period is Cynewulf, who probably flourished about the close of the eighth century, and in the early part of the ninth.

The whole of Anglo-Saxon poetry which is extant amounts to about thirty thousand lines, and a large proportion of it has been preserved in two volumes. One of them is the Codex Exoniensis, or Exeter Book,— a collection which is supposed to be the one mentioned among the gifts made in the eleventh century to St. Peter's monastery in Exeter by Bishop Leofric. It is there spoken of as "a large English book of various matters composed in song-wise"

(*mycel Englisc bōc be gehwylcum þingum on lēoðwīsan geworht*). The other is the Codex Vercellensis,—a collection found in 1822 at Vercelli in Northern Italy.

Prose.—The language of Anglo-Saxon poetry stands at the farthest possible remove from that of daily life. It constantly repeats the same ideas in slightly varying phrases; it uses numerous compound words peculiar to itself; the construction of its sentences is often involved and intricate, and the meaning in consequence obscure; and through it all, with a certain grandeur, there is joined a certain monotony from the little range of thought or expression found in it. On the other hand, Anglo-Saxon prose is for the most part exceedingly simple in its construction. It may be said to begin with King Alfred, who is, indeed, its most prominent author. Like the poetry, its subject-matter is mainly religious, and to a large extent it is made up of translations from the Latin. Still two of its most important monuments are purely original, and remain of especial value to the present day. One of these is a collection of the laws of various kings. The other is a series of annals called the "Anglo-Saxon Chronicle," in which the events of each year are recorded under that date. Of this work one manuscript extends down to the death of King Stephen in 1154. Anglo-Saxon prose is of great interest from a linguistic point of view: as literature, it is, in general, dull beyond description.

The following specimen of Anglo-Saxon prose is

taken from the account given to King Alfred by Ohthere, one of his Norse subjects, and inserted by the former into his translation of the History of Paulus Orosius, a Spanish priest of the fifth century. In the interlinear gloss the modern forms of the Anglo-Saxon words are, when not used, placed in parentheses: and some of the words not found or implied in the Anglo-Saxon, but employed in the gloss, are placed in brackets.

Ōhthęre sæde his hlāforde, Ælfrēde cyninge, ðæt
Ohthere said to his lord, King Alfred, that
hē ealra Norðmǫnna norðmest būde. Hē cwæð ðæt
he of all Northmen northmost dwelt. He said (quoth) that
hē būde ǫn ðǣm lande norðweardum wiþ ðā West-sæ.
he dwelt in the land northward along (with) the West-sea.
Hē sæde, ðēah, ðæt ðæt land sīe swīðe lang norð ðǫnan;
He said, though, that that land is very long north thence;
ac hit is eall wēste, būton ǫn fēawum stōwum styccemæl-
but it is all waste, except (but) in a few places, [where] here and
um wīciað Finnas, ǫn huntoðe ǫn wintra, ǫnd ǫn sumera
there dwell Finns, for (in) hunting in winter, and in summer
ǫn fiscaðe be ðǣre sæ. Hē sæde ðæt hē, æt sumum
for (in) fishing along (by) that sea. He said that he, at a certain (some)
cirre, wolde fandian hū lǫnge ðæt land
time, wished (would) to find out by trial how long the land
norðryhte lǣge; oððe hwæðer ǣnig mǫnn be norðan
due north lay; or whether any man north of
ðǣm wēstenne būde. Þā fōr hē norðryhte be ðǣm
the waste dwelt. Then went (fared) he due north along (by) the
lande: lēt him ealne weg ðæt wēste land ǫn ðæt
land: [he] left all [the] way the waste land on the
stēorbord, ǫnd ðā wīdsǣ ǫn ðæt bæcbord, þrīe dagas.
starboard, and the wide-sea on the larboard three days.

Þā wæs hē swā feor norð swā ðā hwælhuntan firrest
Then was he so far north as the whale-hunters farthest
farað. Þā fōr hē ðāgīet norðryhte, swā feor
go (fare). Then went (fared) he still (then yet) due north, so far
swā hē meahte ǫn ðǣm ōðrum þrīm dagum gesiglan.
as he might in the second (other) three days sail.

It will be observed that in the extract just given two letters occur which are no longer in use. Here, therefore, it will be desirable to give a brief account of the relation of the Anglo-Saxon to the Modern English alphabet. The characters used by the Teutonic tribes, when they first came over, were Runes. After their conversion to Christianity, they abandoned these for the Roman alphabet, as its letters had been modified by the Britons. To this alphabet they added two Runes. One of them was ƿ, which hardly lasted beyond the Anglo-Saxon period. Its place was early taken by the doubled *u*, and these two united form the letter *w*. The other Runic letter was þ. This probably indicated the two sounds of *th* seen in *thin* and *then*, *breath* and *breathe*. There was another letter also, which in its origin is nothing but a crossed *d*, and is represented by the form ð. In its use, it seems to be a variant of þ, and indicated the same sounds.

Both of these characters are represented in Modern English by the digraph *th*. They went largely out of use in the fifteenth century, and after the introduction of printing were universally abandoned. But the close resemblance in writing of *þ*, the so-called thorn-

letter, to *y* renders it frequently difficult to distinguish the one from the other in the manuscripts. Later the two came to be practically similar, and not only in early writing but in early printing *the*, *that*, and a few other words appeared in the form of abbreviations *y^e*, *y^t*, and the like. In *ye*, which in the sense of 'the' is still occasionally found in imitations or supposed imitations of the archaic style, the *y* really represents the Anglo-Saxon Rune ƿ, and is properly pronounced as *th*.

As compared with the present English alphabet, the Anglo-Saxon presents certain other variations. There is no distinct form for *j* from *i*; and though *k*, *q*, and *z* occur at times in the manuscripts, they did not represent sounds then, any more than now, which were not already represented by other letters, or by combinations of letters. The use of *k* for *c* became much more common after the Conquest. Another character, ȝ, in common use during the Old and Middle English periods, was, in its origin, the Roman *g* as modified by the British scribes. It represents the modern *y* or *g* at the beginning of a word, and *gh* at the end, as *ȝe*, 'ye,' *ȝeve*, 'give,' and *inouȝ*, 'enough.' This character disappeared also after the introduction of printing. During the middle ages the letters of the Roman alphabet were changed into a variety of forms by the ingenuity of the monastic scribes; and the peculiar modification of this alphabet used in England is called black-letter. During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries books were reg-

ularly printed in black-letter; but, in the first half of the seventeenth century, it was generally given up for the clearer, original Roman characters from which it had been taken.

CHAPTER III.

INFLUENCE OF FOREIGN TONGUES UPON THE ENGLISH OF THE ANGLO-SAXON PERIOD.

DOWN to the time of the Norman Conquest the Anglo-Saxon form of the English language remained essentially the same. The grammatical modifications, in particular, that it underwent, were comparatively few in number, and slight in importance. Some inflections were lost. Cases of nouns, adjectives, and pronouns, which originally possessed different endings, came to have the same. The tendency of verbs of the strong conjugation to pass over to the weak[1] began even thus early to show itself. Still none of these changes were violent or extensive: all of them took place in accordance with the natural law of development. But during this period the language came into contact with three other tongues, which to some extent affected the vocabulary, and perhaps, also, the form of expression. These were, first, the speech of the native Celtic inhabitants; secondly, the Latin; and, thirdly, the Norse. Of

[1] See pages 153, 154.

these, Latin was the only one which at that time added any appreciable number of words to the language of literature. Terms from the Celtic or the Norse may have been adopted into the colloquial speech; but it was not until the break-up of the classic Anglo-Saxon, which followed the Norman Conquest, that they occur to any extent in writing.

Celtic. — The native inhabitants found by the Teutonic invaders in the part of Britain they overran belonged to the Cymric branch of the Celtic stock. As the conquest was the work of several hundred years, it might be supposed that the vocabulary of each people would have received large accessions from that of the other. Such, however, was not the case. Very few Celtic terms are found in Anglo-Saxon literature; and not many, indeed, appear to have made their way into written English in the centuries immediately following the coming of the Norman-French. This was largely due to the little intercourse that prevailed between the two races and the feelings of hatred developed by long years of war. The fact that the native inhabitants were Christians, and the invaders heathen, tended also to widen the breach between them; but, even after the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons, religious differences came in to impart additional bitterness to the hostility that sprang from political and military conflicts. Bede, writing in the earlier half of the eighth century, says, that in his day it was not the custom of the Britons to pay any respect to the faith and religion of the English, or to corre-

spond with them any more than with pagans. In consequence, very few of the Celtic words in our speech go back to a very early date. Certainly the modern importations from that quarter far exceed in number the earlier ones. Moreover, they have generally come to us from the Gadhelic branch, and not from the Cymric[1]: and in most cases they denote objects peculiar, or originally peculiar, to the race by which they were first employed. The words *bard*, *brogue*, 'shoe,' *claymore*, *druid*, *plaid*, *shamrock*, *whiskey*, for illustration, are all of Celtic origin; but none of them existed in the English of the Anglo-Saxon period, and most of them are of comparatively recent introduction.

It is natural that Celtic names of places should be much more common, and of these many continue to exist in the speech of to-day. The Celtic *avon*, meaning 'river,' and *esk*, meaning 'water,' are still found as the appellation of several streams of Great Britain. The Cymric *pen* and the Gadhelic *ben*, both meaning 'head,' and hence a 'peak,' occur with a good deal of frequency as part of the names of mountains. Numerous other Celtic words can be detected in place-names, such, for instance, as *strath*, 'a broad valley,' in Strathclyde, *tre*, 'a village,' in Tredegar, and probably *lin*, 'a deep pool,' in Lincoln. Names of persons are, as might be expected, even more numerous than names of places. There is an old English saying which runs as follows: —

[1] See page 5.

By Tre, Ros,[1] Pol,[2] Lan,[3] Caer,[4] and Pen
You know the most of Cornish men.

These prefixes and several others are still numerous in proper names.

It is to be added, that the influence of Celtic upon English has never been made until lately the subject of scientific investigation; and even now the work of determining the degree to which it has affected the vocabulary is far from having been completed. Extravagant claims have been and are still put forth as to the extent of this element in our tongue. In particular, long lists of English words have been often given as derived from Celtic ones more or less resembling them. These lists are, as a general rule, utterly untrustworthy. In many instances there is no relationship whatever between the words compared; in other instances the relationship is due to the fact that the same word has come down from the primitive Indo-European to both the Celtic and Teutonic branches; and in other instances still, where there has been actual borrowing, it is the Celtic tongues that have borrowed from the English, and not the English from the Celtic. At best, the influence of the languages of this stock upon our speech has been slight.

Latin. — Far greater, even as regards Anglo-Saxon, was the influence of the Latin. This first manifested itself in the seventh century, and was due, like most

[1] Cymric *rhos*, a moor; Gaelic *ros*, a headland.
[2] A marsh, pool. [3] An enclosure, church.
[4] A cairn; or from Lat. *castra*, a camp.

other changes in the vocabulary, to the operation of causes not in themselves of a linguistic nature. In the year 597 a band of Roman missionaries, sent by Pope Gregory I., came, under the leadership of Augustine, to the kingdom of Kent, with the object of converting the people. Their efforts were successful; and by the end of the following century all of the Teutonic inhabitants of Britain had gone over from heathenism to the Christian faith. One immediate consequence was to bring into prominence and power in the country a body of ecclesiastics who not only carried on the church-service in Latin, but were in the habit of using that language largely in conversation and in writing. For the first time in its history, Teutonic Britain was brought into contact with the superior literature and civilization of the Continent. The inevitable result was to introduce into the Anglo-Saxon a number of words taken from the Latin. At first these were naturally connected with the church-service, or with ecclesiastical proceedings; but, as time went on, a variety of terms came in, denoting objects in no way connected with religion.

As the influence of Celtic in this early period has been overrated by many, that of Latin has been underrated by most. The words borrowed from it were not only considerable in number, they were, to a great extent, thoroughly assimilated. This is made manifest by the following facts. First, from the Latin nouns introduced, new adjectives and verbs and

adverbs were formed by the addition of Teutonic endings; as from *plante*, 'plant' (Lat. *planta*), was formed the verb *plantian*, 'to plant'; from *regol*, 'rule' (from Lat. *regula*), were formed the adjective *regollic*, 'rule-like,' 'regular,' and the adverb *regollice*, 'regularly.' Secondly, the new words were used with perfect freedom to form compounds with the native ones; as, for instance, *biscop*, 'bishop' (Lat. *episcopus*), enters into composition with nearly a dozen Anglo-Saxon nouns, of which list *biscop-rīce*, 'bishopric,' — the only one which has come down to the modern tongue, — will serve as an illustration.

In truth, the results that take place now when words from one tongue are brought in large numbers into another can be found exemplified in the influence of Latin upon the English of this early period. Some of the native words began to disappear entirely. Thus, *fefor*, 'fever' (from Lat. *febris*), drove out *hriðe*, the original word denoting that disease. Again, the borrowed and the native words would frequently stand side by side. Thus, in King Alfred's writings, as well as later ones, *munt*, 'mount' (from Lat. *mons*, *mont-is*), is used interchangeably with *dūn*, the present 'down,' and *beorg*, seen in our 'iceberg.' Before the Norman Conquest six hundred words at least had been introduced from Latin into the Anglo-Saxon. Some of them occur but once or twice in the literature handed down, others are met with frequently. Were we to include in this list of borrowed terms the compounds into which the borrowed terms enter, the

whole number would be swelled to three or four times that above given. It is also to be marked, that not only were nouns directly borrowed, but also adjectives and verbs, though to a far less extent. The words that came into Anglo-Saxon from the seventh century on constitute the first real introduction of the Latin element into our tongue; but, in accordance with the terminology generally adopted, it is styled "Latin of the Second Period."

Scandinavian. — The extent of this Latin influence upon Anglo-Saxon is something that is capable of pretty definite determination; but such is not the case with the Scandinavian element that comes now to be considered. The descendants of the Teutonic invaders, not much more than a century after their conversion to Christianity, were to suffer the same evils that had been inflicted by their own heathen free-booting forefathers upon the original Celtic population. Under the year 787 the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle states, that in the days of Bertric, King of Wessex, three shiploads of Northmen landed upon the coast of Britain, and slew the officers who went out to meet them with the intent of taking them prisoners. "These," it continues, "were the first ships of Danish men who sought the land of the English race." This event marks the beginning of a steadily increasing series of marauding descents upon the seaboard, and inroads into the interior. These culminated, in the latter part of the ninth century, in the devastation or subjection of nearly all the Anglo-

Saxon territory, and the permanent settlement of a large part of it. East Anglia was conquered in 870, and became and thenceforward remained a Danish kingdom. The invaders also overran or subdued the greater portion of what is now Northern and Eastern England. Their attempts upon Wessex, however, were checked effectually at last by the defeat they received in 878 from King Alfred at a place designated in the Chronicle as Ethandun, which is generally considered to be Edington in Wiltshire. This was followed by the Peace of Wedmore. According to the terms of this treaty, the whole country was divided between the two nations; the Danes on their part agreeing to adopt the Christian faith.

Even after this, incursions did not cease to be made, though they were on a comparatively small scale. Frequent wars went on, however, between the English and the Danes settled in England. Finally, toward the close of the tenth century the invasion was renewed on a grander scale. It ended in establishing upon the English throne, from 1013 to 1042, a Danish dynasty, to which belonged Sweyn, Canute, Harold Harefoot, and Hardicanute. But in every case the new-comers seem to have made no effort to keep up their own tongue, but adopted the speech of the people among whom they had fixed their homes. The Scandinavian settlements are, for the most part, limited to East Anglia (Norfolk and Suffolk), to Lincolnshire and the neighboring counties on the west, to Yorkshire, Lancashire, Westmore-

land, and Cumberland. Their existence is generally conceded to be indicated by various names of towns. Among the more common of these are those ending in *-by* (Old Norse *býr*, a 'dwelling,' 'village'), in *-thorp* or *-torp* (O. N. *þorp*, a 'hamlet,' 'village'), in *-toft* (O. N. *tōft*, 'a homestead,' 'enclosure'), and in *-thwaite* (O. N. *þveiti*, a 'clearing'). Examples can be seen in Whitby, Althorp, Lowestoft, and Braithwaite.

There was, accordingly, no slight infusion of the Scandinavian element in the population that inhabited Britain. But the extent of Scandinavian influence upon the language is difficult to ascertain. This is due to the fact that the Old Norse and the Anglo-Saxon are both Teutonic tongues. As they both descended from a common ancestor, it was natural that a large number of words should be the same, or nearly the same, in both. Furthermore, it is not conceivable that all the vocabulary possessed by either has been handed down in the literature of each that has been saved. When, therefore, a word occurs in Modern English which is not found in Anglo-Saxon, or any other Low German tongue, but is found in Old Norse, we can say that there is every probability that it came from the latter. Still we cannot say this with certainty, for it may have existed in the former, and not have been preserved.

There is, moreover, a special difficulty in this question, from the fact that it was in the Anglian kingdoms that these foreign settlements were made. But

the existing remains of Northumbrian speech, which is an Anglian dialect of the Anglo-Saxon, show plainly that this dialect was much more closely allied to the Old Norse than is the West-Saxon, which is a Saxon dialect of Anglo-Saxon. In the last-named the infinitive of the verb, for illustration, regularly ends in *-an*. In the other two the *-n* is dropped. In West-Saxon 'to tell' is *tellan;* in Northumbrian it is *tella;* in Norse it is *telia*. It is, therefore, quite conceivable, though it may not be very probable, that words and forms which we ascribe to the Scandinavian element may, in fact, have not come from it, but from the speech of the Anglian population; for we have no such extensive vocabulary of the Northumbrian dialect as we have of the West-Saxon.

Still there is no doubt that a large number of Norse words were introduced at this time into the spoken tongue. Many of these have spread beyond their original limits, and linger to this day in the local dialects of Northern England and Southern Scotland. In these dialects, indeed, this foreign element is far more conspicuous than in the language of literature. Still, in regard to the latter also, it is reasonable to suppose that both Norse words, and Norse meanings of words, in many cases, have supplanted those, which, up to the time of its introduction, had been the prevailing or exclusive ones in Anglo-Saxon. For illustration, *sindon* was the ordinary form for the plural of the present tense of the verb *be:* its place is now supplied by *are*, the original of which

is rare in Anglo-Saxon, but the regular form in the Norse. So from the Norse *kalla* we seem to get our verb *call;* for in Anglo-Saxon the corresponding word is *clipian*, 'to çlepe.' Again, the word *dream* is common to both tongues; but in Anglo-Saxon it means 'joy,' 'music'; and it is from the Norse that we have taken the modern signification. Still it was not till the break-up of the native speech, that followed upon the Norman Conquest, that Norse words came to be used to any extent in the language of literature.

CHAPTER IV.

THE NORMAN CONQUEST AND THE FRENCH LANGUAGE IN ENGLAND.

UP to the middle of the eleventh century the influences that had been at work upon the language had not been productive of great changes; still less were they revolutionary in their nature. The Norsemen for a time brought ruin everywhere; but whether they desolated temporarily, or settled permanently, they did not anywhere materially disturb the native speech as an instrument of communication, or affect in the slightest its literary supremacy. Even during the time their kings ruled the country, they seem not to have made any effort to introduce into it the use of their own tongue. But a series of events was now to take place which completely changed the future political history of the English people; and it was attended by as profound and wide-reaching a change in the character of English speech. In the latter half of the eleventh century came the Norman Conquest and the introduction into the island of the French as the language of the higher classes.

The most powerful effects upon the native tongue

produced by these two agencies did not fully show themselves until three centuries had passed; but a very early and almost immediate effect wrought upon it was to throw it into a state of confusion. The English of the Anglo-Saxon period sank at once from its position as the language of culture, whatever that culture was. When, in the fourteenth century, it once more reappears as the language of a classic literature, it is a language and literature widely different from that which had been supplanted or degraded by the coming of a stranger race. From the Norman Conquest on, the native speech no longer followed the natural law of development which it would have followed as a pure Teutonic tongue. To explain the nature of the changes that were wrought in it, it will be necessary to give some account of the men whose coming caused them, and of the relations which for a long time existed on English soil between the French and English languages.

The Norman-French. — Toward the close of the ninth century a band of Northmen, under a renowned leader named Rolf, or Rollo, sailed up the Seine, captured Rouen, and, from that point as a centre, carried on a continuous and destructive war with the native inhabitants. At last, in 912, peace was made. To the invaders, Charles the Simple, the king of the French, ceded a large territory bordering upon the British Channel, which was called from them Normandy. On the other hand, Rollo agreed to become the feudal vassal of the French monarch, and to embrace the

Christian religion. These conditions were fully carried into effect. The Norsemen, in consequence, became the undisturbed owners of the district given up to them, and, along with the religion of their subjects, they also adopted their language.

The Norman Conquest. — The relations between the English and the Norman-French courts began to assume about the beginning of the eleventh century a somewhat close character by the marriage, in 1002, of the Anglo-Saxon king, Ethelred II., to Emma, sister of Richard III., the fifth duke of Normandy. One of the children of this union was a son, Edward, who is usually styled the Confessor. He reigned over England from 1043 to 1066. But the early years of this prince were spent at the court of his uncles Richard and Robert, dukes of Normandy; and when, after the termination of the Danish dynasty in 1042, he was recalled to his native country, and placed upon the throne, he continued to retain a preference for the friends and the tastes of his youth. Norman-French noblemen were assigned positions of responsibility and power; Norman-French priests were made English bishops. It is true, a revolution in 1052 drove out most of the foreign favorites; but the foreign influence could not have passed away utterly. Early in 1066 Edward the Confessor died; and Harold, the most powerful nobleman in the kingdom, was chosen king in his stead. A claim to the throne was immediately made, however, by William, Duke of Normandy, a cousin of the deceased monarch. To support it, he

invaded England in the autumn of the same year; and the battle of Hastings, fought on the 14th of October, 1066, resulted in the defeat and death of Harold and the subjection of the whole country.

Effect of the Conquest upon the Native Language.— Two general facts in regard to language become apparent as the effect of the Conquest. One is, that, though the native tongue continued to be spoken by the great majority of the population, it went out of use as the language of high culture. It was no longer taught in the schools. It was no longer employed at the court of the king, or the castles of the nobles. It was no longer used in judicial proceedings; to some extent even it ceased to be recognized in the services of the church. This displacement was probably slow at first; but it was done effectually at last. The second fact is, that, after the Conquest, the educated classes, whether lay or ecclesiastical, preferred to write either in Latin or in French; the latter steadily tending to become more and more the language of literature as well as of polite society. We have, in consequence, the singular spectacle of two tongues flourishing side by side in the same country, and yet for centuries so utterly distinct and independent, that neither can be said to have exerted much direct appreciable influence upon the other, though in each case the indirect influence was great.

To understand the relations between these two tongues involves an acquaintance with the relations existing between the two races that spoke them; and

in both cases the knowledge we have, especially of the earlier period, is obscure. Our information, indeed, in regard to our speech, is based almost exclusively upon incidental notices contained in the Latin chronicles written in the twelfth century and in the beginning of the thirteenth. In these the subject of language is rarely treated of specifically, and never at any length. Accordingly, the inferences that are drawn can be looked upon only as probable, and not as certain. From the latter part of the thirteenth century on, the native tongue is more an object of consideration in itself, and our knowledge of the relations between French and English becomes much more positive and precise. A few of the more important statements will be quoted; but in every case it is necessary to bear in mind, not only what was said, but when it was said.

The estimate entertained of the language would inevitably be affected by the estimate entertained of the people who spoke it. It was natural that a contemptuous feeling should exist at first on the part of the conquerors towards the conquered. Though little evidence has been handed down, such certainly seems to have been the case. One early authority on this point has now indeed been set aside. Up to a comparatively late period, the History which purported to be written by Ingulph, appointed Abbot of Croyland in 1076, was regarded as authentic, and its statements were implicitly credited. In this work it was asserted, that, after the accession of William, the English race was held in

contempt and detestation; that the Normans so abhorred the language, that the laws of the land and the decrees of the king were put into Latin; and that in the schools the elements of grammar were imparted in French. Though this History was professedly the production of a contemporary of the Conqueror, there is no doubt that much, if not all, of it, was a forgery of the fourteenth century. Its statements, therefore, are of no weight as belonging to the period in which the work purports to have been written. Yet a certain value may be fairly deemed to attach to them, as embodying the opinion which had become currently accepted in later times as to the views that then were supposed to have prevailed after the Conquest about the English race and language.

Still there is direct evidence that contempt was both felt and expressed by the foreigners for the native population. Henry of Huntingdon, who flourished in the former half of the twelfth century, in speaking of the state of the country at the death of William the Conqueror, asserted that it was a disgrace to be even called an Englishman. This is a state of feeling that would of necessity pass away rapidly with the descendants of the conquerors, who had made England their permanent home; but it would as certainly continue to exist with those subjects of the English king who belonged by birth and family ties to the Continent. Evidence of the prevalence of this sentiment on their part can be found late in the twelfth century. William de Longchamp, Bishop of Ely, was left as guardian

of the realm by Richard I. (1189–1199), when setting out on his crusade. This minister is asserted to have felt and expressed the utmost contempt for the people he was called upon to govern. He was utterly ignorant of the English tongue. He so despised the race which spoke it that usual forms of imprecation were such as these: "May I become an Englishman if I do this!" "I were worse than an Englishman were I to consent to this."

Feelings of this kind would be certain to extend to the language. Still there is no evidence that any attempt was made at any time to prevent the employment or check the growth of the popular speech. In truth, the ecclesiastical historian, Ordericus Vitalis (1075–1144), tells us, that William the Conqueror strove to make himself acquainted with it, so as to deal with his subjects without the aid of an interpreter; and his lack of success was not due to indifference, but to advancing age and want of leisure. It is indeed the belief of many that his son, Henry I., who reigned from 1100 to 1135, made himself master of the English language. But if he did, it is not likely that his example found many imitators. The tongue of the common people was, in truth, in the eyes of the Norman a barbarous one. He made not the slightest attempt to destroy it: he contented himself with simply despising it. To him it was the rude speech of a rude people which had been subjected to the sway of a superior race.

French and English Languages on English Soil. — English, indeed, after the Conquest, did not cease to

be a written language: it did cease to be a cultivated one. None of those conservative influences were cast about it which are sure to prevent rapid and radical changes in any tongue that is regularly employed by the educated. But the great body of the people clung to it. They were ignorant, and they corrupted it; but, as they could not or would not learn the language of the higher classes, they preserved it. While French, therefore, continued to remain for centuries the tongue employed in polite conversation; while it and Latin were the ones mainly employed in literature, the native speech could not and did not fail, as time went on, to make its influence more and more felt by the mere weight of numbers on the part of those using it.

It has been an assertion frequently made that the nobility did not learn to speak English till the fourteenth century. The statement may be true to this extent, that the subjects of the English king who were born and brought up on the Continent, and spent there much of their lives, never learned to speak it at all. But it is against all probability that those members of the higher classes who were natives of the island, whose interests mainly lay there, whose lives were largely passed there, should not have been able to understand and make use of the speech of the great body of the common people with whom they came into daily contact. From the very first, necessity would have forced them at times to employ English, even if French were the language of their choice.

There is indeed ample reason to believe that by the end of the thirteenth century English had become the mother-tongue of the children of the nobility dwelling in England, and that it was through the medium of it they acquired largely their knowledge of French. Several copies of a widely circulated text-book then prepared for their instruction in the latter language are still in existence.[1] It contains French sentences, with an interlinear translation in English. This certainly indicates that the child learned invariably the native speech in infancy, and was then made to acquire the speech which in after life he was to use mainly. Though this text-book belongs to the close of the thirteenth century, other incidental references suggest that the custom it implies was probably older. One of the chief reasons, for instance, of the unpopularity of Henry III. (1214–1272) was the favor shown by him to noblemen who came from the Continent, and who would naturally have little knowledge of purely English customs and little sympathy with English feelings. This was one of the grievances that added bitterness to the civil war between the king and the barons. In giving an account of the events of 1263, one of the writers of the Chronicle, miscalled Matthew of Westminster's, states that whoever was unable to speak the English language was regarded by the common people as a vile and contemptible

[1] It was the work of Walter de Biblesworth, and is contained in Thomas Wright's collection of "Anglo-Saxon and Old English Vocabularies," 1st ed.

person. If this assertion be true, there is no escape from the legitimate inference that those members of the nobility whose homes were in the island must have been familiar with the native speech.

It is easy to see, however, that agencies were at work that tended continually to bring the native tongue into disrepute. These were especially active after the accession of the Angevin dynasty. The French language was not only the speech of the higher classes in the island, but it was also the speech of a large number of subjects of the English ruler whose homes were on the Continent. Henry II., who reigned from 1154 to 1189, was the immediate lord of several French provinces, so that his possessions in that country exceeded in extent the territory under the direct control of the king of France himself. With the inhabitants of these the dominant race in England was closely allied in blood and sympathy. The French was likewise a language which had already begun to develop a literature of some interest and value. It had before it a promising future. It is evident that an uncultivated tongue like the English was at an immense disadvantage as compared with a cultivated one existing alongside of it. Even the island itself was, to a great degree, simply looked upon as a storehouse of men and materials, from which its kings could draw supplies to prosecute their designs of conquest upon the Continent; and the language itself could not hope to be rated at as high a value as the country in which it was the speech of

the lower classes only. It is therefore not surprising that for a time there should be not only a continued, but, within certain limits, an increasing use of the French upon the soil of Great Britain.

Had, indeed, the English monarchs continued to retain their possessions in France, it is safe to say that the English tongue would never have become the vehicle of a great literature. But during the thirteenth century events occurred that changed this condition of things. The French provinces that had been directly under the sway of the English monarchs gradually passed out of their hands; and the various efforts made then and subsequently to regain them were never permanently successful. In particular, Normandy, their great ancestral fief, was lost in 1204, during the reign of John. This had the inevitable effect of largely transferring the interests of the nobility from the Continent to the island. Henceforth their lot was to be cast amid the English-speaking race that dwelt upon the estates held by them in England.

In consequence of the loss of the English possessions in France, feelings of hostility were certain to arise between the people of the island and of the Continent. The breach between them was still further widened by the action taken in 1244 by the French king, Louis IX. In that year he summoned to Paris all the nobility of England who had possessions in France, and gave them their choice of relinquishing their property in the one country or the other. This he did on the

manifest ground that it was impossible for the same man to be the faithful subject of two rulers, always in rivalry, and often in hostility. They were, accordingly, required to give up one or the other. As soon as the knowledge of this transaction came to the ears of the English king, he at once ordered that all Frenchmen, especially Normans, who had possessions in England, should have their property confiscated.

The first effect of these political changes was, therefore, to cause the English and the French to look upon each other more and more as different peoples. A second and more important result was to hasten the union between the English of native and of foreign descent, and to wipe out distinctions of any kind heretofore existing between them. Yet it is clear that there could never be a complete union without the adoption of a common language; and this had not taken place at the end of the thirteenth century. It could not, indeed, take place as long as French was regarded as the language of culture and of literature, and the use of it indicative of social position. The children of the nobility and gentry might, and doubtless did, learn English in their infancy. But, though familiar with it, and employing it with their inferiors, it was not the tongue they spoke in their intercourse among themselves.

On this point, we have the direct and unimpeachable testimony of contemporary writers. One of these belongs to the very close of the thirteenth century. It is an observation made then by the composer of the

rhymed chronicle which has commonly gone under the name of Robert of Gloucester's. In giving an account of the conquest of England by William, he is led to speak of the two languages still existing in the country side by side. This he does in the following words: —

Þus com, lo! Engelond into Normandies hond.
And þe Normans ne couþe speke þo bote hor owe speche,
And speke French as hii dude atom, and hor children dude also teche.
So þat heiemen of þis lond, þat of hor blod come,
Holdeþ alle þulke speche þat hii of hom nome.
Vor bote a man conne Frenss, me telþ of him lute;
Ac lowe men holdeþ to Engliss and to hor owe speche 3ute.
Ich wene þer ne beþ in al þe world contreyes none
Þat ne holdeþ to hor owe speche bote Engelond one.[1]

From this it is evident that, about 1300, French was still the language of the higher classes, and that to be ignorant of it was in a measure a social stigma. Nor did this feeling speedily die out. In the earlier half of the fourteenth century flourished Ralph Higdon, a monk of St. Werburgh's in Chester. He

[1] Lo! thus came England into the possession of Normandy.
And the Normans could then speak only their own speech,
And spoke French as they did at home, and caused their children also to be taught it.
So that noblemen of this land, that come of their blood,
Hold all the same speech that they from them received.
For unless a man knows French, he is little thought of;
But low men keep to English, and to their own speech yet.
I think there be not in all the world any countries
That do not hold to their own speech, but England alone.

wrote in Latin a history of the world, under the title of " Polychronicon " ; and in it he gave an account of the languages spoken in England, and of the corruption that had crept into the native speech. A translation of this work was made in the same century by John of Trevisa, vicar of Berkeley. The passage explanatory of the corruption that had overtaken the tongue he rendered in the following words : —

Þis apeyryng of the burþ-tonge ys bycause of twey þinges: — on ys, for chyldern in scole, aȝenes the vsage and manere of al oþer nacions, buþ compelled for to leue here oune longage, and for to construe here lessons and here thinges a Freynsch, and habbeþ, suþthe the Normans come furst into Engelond. Also gentil men children buþ ytauȝt for to speke Freynsch fram tyme þat a buþ yrokked in here cradel, and conneþ speke, and playe wiþ a child hys brouch; and oplondysch men wol lykne ham-sylf to gentil men, and fondeþ with gret bysynes for to speke Freynsch, for to be more ytold of.[1]

The words of Higden, as translated by Trevisa, bear out the inference previously drawn that the children of the higher classes first learned to speak English, but from their earliest years were sedulously con-

[1] This impairment of the birth-tongue is because of two things: one is, because children in school, against the usage and manner of all other nations, are compelled to leave their own language, and to construe their lessons and their matters in French, and have, since the Normans came first into England. Also, gentlemen's children are taught to speak French from (the) time that they are rocked in their cradle, and can speak, and play with a child's brooch; and country men (or rustics) wish to make themselves like gentlemen, and strive with great earnestness to speak French, in order to be thought the more of.

strained to abandon its employment among themselves, and to use French in its place. This was, however, a practice that under the conditions then existing could not long continue. There is evidence that it had largely ceased before the middle of the fourteenth century. The author of the metrical romance of "Arthur and Merlin," which is believed to have been written during the minority of Edward III., speaks of the advantages derived from the study of Latin and French in the schools; but he adds the following: —

> Right is that Inglishe Inglishe understond,
> That was born in Inglond;
> Freynshe use this gentilman,
> Ac everich Inglishe can;
> Many noble I have yseighe,
> That no Freynshe couthe seye.[1]

Here is a direct statement that French was unknown to many, while English was known to all; and this was without doubt increasingly the case as we advance farther into the fourteenth century.

In truth, by the middle of that century the movement towards the general adoption of the native speech had acquired a momentum which could no longer be resisted. From this period, signs of the general em-

[1] It is right that Englishmen understand English,
Who were born in England;
These gentlemen use French,
But every one knows English;
Many a nobleman I have seen
Who could speak no French.

ployment of English by all classes in the community begin to multiply. Traditions connected with education are among the last to lose their hold upon the mind: practices connected with it are among the last to be abandoned. But, in the latter half of the fourteenth century, instruction through the medium of the French had to a great extent been supplanted by instruction through the medium of the English. On this point we have positive testimony. Higden's account of the state of the language belongs to the earlier half of the fourteenth century. Trevisa's version of the "Polychronicon" was completed in 1387. In it he felt obliged to make a correction of the statement found in his original, which has just been given. This was rendered necessary by the changes that had taken place between the time the book was written and the time it was translated.

Trevisa asserted, that, since the great pestilence of 1349, called the Black Death, the system of instruction had been revolutionized. Upon the remark of Higden that the children of the higher classes were taught French from their cradles, he made the following comment: —

Þys manere was moche yvsed tofore the furste moreyn, and ys seþthe somdel ychaunged. For Iohan Cornwal, a mayster of gramere, chayngede the lore in gramer-scole, and construccion of Freynsch into Englysch: and Richard Pencrych lurnede þat manere techyng of hym, and oþer men of Pencrych; so þat now, the 3er of oure Lord a thousond þre hondred foure score and fyue, of þe secunde Kyng Richard after þe conquest nyne, in al the gramer-scoles of Engelond children leueþ Frensch

and construeþ and lurneþ an Englysch, and habbeþ þerby avauntage in on syde and desavauntage yn anoþer: here avauntage ys, that a lurneþ here gramer yn lasse tyme than childern wer ywoned to do; disavauntage ys, þat now childern of gramer-scole conneþ no more Frensch þan can here lift heele, and þat ys harm for ham, and a scholle passe the se and trauayle in strange londes, and in meny caas also. Also gentil men habbeþ now moche yleft for to teche here childern Frensch.[1]

There is even more convincing evidence as to the general adoption of English by all classes than the change in the method of instruction in the schools. This can be found in the act in regard to the pleadings in the law-courts, which was passed by the Parliament held at Westminster in 1362, the thirty-sixth year of Edward III. The preamble recites in full the reasons which led to the making of the statute; and, in spite of the verbiage usual in documents of this kind, most of it is well worthy of quotation. "Because it is often shewed to the king," it said, "by the

[1] This custom was much used before the first pestilence, and is since somewhat changed. For John Cornwall, a teacher of grammar, changed the method of instruction in the grammar-school, and (the) construing from French into English; and Richard Pencrich learned from him that manner of teaching, and other men from Pencrich: so that now, the year of our Lord a thousand three hundred four score and five, the ninth (year of the reign) of the second king Richard after the Conquest, in all the grammar-schools of England children give up French, and construe and learn in English, and have thereby advantage on one side, and disadvantage on another. Their advantage is, that they learn their grammar in less time than children were wont to do; (the) disadvantage is, that now grammar-school children know no more French than their left heel knows: and that is harm for them, if they shall pass the sea and travel in strange lands, and in many (other) cases also. Also, gentlemen have now much left teaching their children French.

prelates, dukes, earls, barons, and all the commonalty, of the great mischiefs which have happened to divers of the realm, because the laws, customs, and statutes of this realm be not commonly known in the same realm, for that they be pleaded, shewed, and judged in the French tongue, which is much unknown in the said realm: so that the people who do implead or be impleaded in the king's court, and in the courts of others, have no knowledge nor understanding of that which is said for them or against them by their serjeants and other pleaders; and that reasonably the said laws and customs shall be the sooner learned and known and better understood in the tongue used in the said realm, and by so much every man of the said realm may the better govern himself without offending of the law, and the better keep, save, and defend his heritage and possessions; and in divers regions and countries, where the king, the nobles, and others of the said realm have been, good governance and full right is done to every person, because that their laws and customs be learned and used in the tongue of the country: the king, desiring the good governance and tranquillity of his people, and to put out and eschew the harms and mischiefs, which do or may happen in this behalf by the occasions aforesaid, hath ordained and established by the assent aforesaid, that all pleas which shall be pleaded in his courts whatsoever, before any of his justices whatsoever, or in his other places, or before any of his other ministers whatsoever, or in the courts and places of any other lords whatsoever

within the realm, shall be pleaded, shewed, defended, answered, debated, and judged in the English tongue."

The law then enacted went into operation at the beginning of the following year. It is a natural inference, from the half-measures attending this piece of legislation, that the English element had become predominant, not only in the national speech, but in the national character. The preamble declared that the statutes, in order to be known and better understood, should be in the tongue used in the realm. But the act itself went no further than to declare that the proceedings in courts of justice must be in the native speech. The law was published in French, the very language it set out to proscribe: and, while it ordered that the pleadings should be in English, it went on to direct that they should be enrolled in Latin.

There can be little doubt that the changes which were taking place were looked upon by many with much disfavor. The growing ignorance of a tongue which was coming to be more and more widely used throughout Christendom was regarded almost in the light of a calamity. Trevisa's remark, that the children in the grammar-schools knew "no more French than their left heel," was re-echoed in the alliterative poem of "Piers Plowman," by Langland, who, in theory at least, is supposed to represent the sentiments of the common people. In a passage inveighing against the general ignorance prevalent in his day, he says: —

Gramer, the grounde of al, bigyleth now children;
For is none of this newe clerkes, whoso nymeth hede,
That can versifye faire, ne formalich enditen;
Ne nou3t on amonge an hundreth, that an auctour can construe,
Ne rede a lettre in any langage but in Latyn or in Englissh.[1]

Rise of Modern English Literature. — It was the Norman Conquest that had primarily brought about the degradation of the native speech. It was to the loss of the English possessions in France that the steady rise in the estimation and general use of the English language was mainly due. This movement which political changes had begun, two other causes now came in to accelerate. The first of these was the creation of a native literature of a character which contributed of itself to give respect and dignity to the tongue in which it was written. The second was the variation, steadily widening, which showed itself between the French spoken in the island and the French spoken on the Continent; and this, from the nature of things, could not but react upon the estimation in which the former was held.

It was in the fourteenth century that the forces which give stability and credit to a language began first to operate powerfully upon the speech employed

[1] Grammar, the ground of all (studies), now leads astray children;
For there is no one of these new clerks, whoso taketh heed,
That can versify fairly, or compose in a correct manner,
And not one amongst an hundred that can construe an author,
Nor read a letter in any language but in Latin or in English.
— *Passus* XV., B. text, lines 365–369.

by the great body of the people. It was in the latter half of that century that English literature, in the strict sense of the word literature, properly begins. Numerous works had, indeed, been written between the Conquest and this period; but, with the exception of some few specimens of lyric poetry, there had been nothing produced, which, looked at from a purely literary point of view, had any reason to show for its existence. If known to the cultivated classes at all, it was probably treated with contempt; for it was certainly contemptible in execution, whatever it may have been in design. The men who, during those centuries, wrote in English, seem to have done so in most cases because they had not the knowledge or the ability to write in Latin or in French. To a very large extent, their works were translations. Compositions on dull subjects, and which themselves imparted additional dulness to the subjects of which they treated, could not, and as an actual fact did not, have any influence worth speaking of on the development of the native speech. They are frequently of great value to us when looked at from certain points of view: they are records of new words and phrases that had come in, of grammatical changes that had taken place, of linguistic influences of every kind that had been and still were at work; but upon the speech of the people of that time they exercised no perceptible influence. Both in language and in literature men imitate only what they admire; and the works produced in English for nearly three centuries following

the Conquest could not, in the vast majority of instances, be admired.

But in the latter half of the fourteenth century a number of eminent writers in the native speech arose. Modern investigation has indeed deprived our literature of one of the most noted of these early authors, with whom it has previously been credited. This was Sir John Mandeville, who was at one time frequently styled "the father of English prose." In the prologue to the account of travels that goes under his name, he is represented as saying that he first wrote the work in Latin, turned it from that tongue into French, and then from French into English. It is now established that the book is largely a compilation made up from the writings of previous travellers. It is fairly certain that it was originally written in French, and translated into English about the end of the fourteenth century. It is an open question, indeed, if the assumed author, Sir John Mandeville, had any existence at all.

Other writers there were, however, at this period, who gave distinction to the language. About 1362, Langland executed the first version of his famous alliterative poem, "The Vision of Piers Plowman." Two later versions appeared, one about 1377, and the other about 1393. All three had a wide circulation. During the last quarter of the century, Gower, after composing works in Latin and in French, tried writing in English also, at the request, as he tells us, of King Richard II. He produced in this last-named tongue a poem of about thirty-two thousand lines, entitled

"Confessio Amantis." But the two great authors of this time are Wycliffe and Chaucer; and their influence upon the language cannot well be over-estimated. The translation of the Scriptures, completed about 1380 by the former and his disciples, and revised about 1390 by Purvey, was circulated far and wide. Its effect upon the development of the English speech has been permanent. To it we owe that peculiar religious dialect, alike remarkable for simplicity, for beauty, and for force, which we see preserved still in our authorized version of the Bible, and which renders the prose of that work distinct from every other existing form of English prose.

Wycliffe brought out several other treatises in the native speech, all of them in prose. Yet though these are effectively written, it is only through this translation of the Bible that he can be said to have exerted a lasting influence upon our tongue. What he did for the language of religion, Chaucer did for the language of literature. In his works, especially in the "Canterbury Tales," men for the first time had great models in the native speech; and the dialect in which he wrote became the one universally employed in literature, largely in consequence of his writing in it. His genius it was that gave dignity to the speech in which it found manifestation. His influence was the more powerful because his choice of the native tongue was not due to his ignorance of French or of Latin, nor to a desire to reach the lowest class of the people as well as the highest, but was a course deliberately

adopted under the conviction that the English language was the only one in which Englishmen had any business to write.

It is clear, indeed, that, not only then but even much later there was great doubt as to the future of the native speech. Gower, as has just been seen, entrusted to three languages a reputation which even with their aid has been hardly able to maintain itself in one. The authority of Chaucer's name and example was, therefore, not unnecessary in this matter. He died in 1400; and, for more than a century after his death, and especially after the revival of classical learning, it was still a venturesome undertaking for an Englishman to write in English if he could write in Latin. A hundred and fifty years later, Roger Ascham, one of the greatest scholars of his age, wrote a book on archery, entitled "Toxophilus." It was first published in 1545. In his dedication of the work to the gentlemen and yeomen of his native land, he felt it necessary to apologize for having written it in the native speech. "If any man would blame me," said he, "either for taking such a matter in hand, or else for writing it in the English tongue, this answer I may make him: that, what the best of the realm think it honest for them to use, I, one of the meanest sort, ought not to suppose it vile for me to write. And though to have written it in another tongue had been both more profitable for my study, and also more honest for my name, yet I can think my labor well bestowed, if, with a little hinderance of my profit and

my name, may come any furtherance to the pleasure or commodity of the gentlemen and yeomen of England, for whose sake I took this matter in hand." And again, in his dedication of the same work to the king, Henry VIII., he says that it would have been easier, and fitter for his profession, to have written the book in Latin or in Greek.

The case of Ascham is by no means an extreme one, though he makes conspicuous the comparative disrepute into which English had fallen, in consequence of the enthusiastic devotion which in his time was beginning to be paid to the great classic writers of Greece and Rome. This feeling about the native tongue showed itself as strongly in the seventeenth century. In 1623, seven years after the death of Shakspeare, Bacon spent no small part of his time in turning his books, originally written in English, into Latin. He did this with the avowed object of saving them for posterity. In the dedication of the third edition of his Essays to the Duke of Buckingham, written in 1625, he says, "I do conceive that the Latin volume of them (being in the universal language) may last as long as books last." The immense incapacity of an author of the seventeenth century, and that author Bacon, to comprehend the future of his native tongue, is, perhaps, the highest tribute that can be paid to that great author of the fourteenth century who deliberately trusted his reputation entirely to it.

Debasement of Anglo-Norman French. — The second cause for the preference of English to French,

which showed itself more and more during the fourteenth century, was largely a result of the loss of Normandy. At the time of the Conquest, and for a long period following, there was no one tongue in Northern France recognized by all as the classic French language. There were, instead, four great dialects of it, corresponding to four great political divisions. These were the Norman, the Picard, the Burgundian, and the French of the Isle of France, which last is strictly the only one that then bore the name of French. Each of these had a literature of its own, and the distinction of speech between all of them was marked enough to impress itself upon the men of that time and is plainly recognized now in the literary monuments that have been handed down. Of these four dialects, it was the Norman that in the eleventh century was carried over into England.

In France, as in England, it was political considerations that decided the character of the speech that was to become generally adopted. In 987, Hugh Capet, Duke of France, was elected its king. At first, his sovereignty, outside of his immediate possessions, was little more than nominal. The great provinces were practically independent, and the languages spoken in them were on an equality. But, during the centuries following, the power of the French royal house steadily rose, and that of its feudal dependents as steadily sank. Under its immediate control, especially in the thirteenth century, fell many territories over which it had previously exercised merely a superior lordship.

The dialect it employed was the dialect of its ancestral dominions, the Isle of France, in which Paris is situated. As it extended its authority over the neighboring districts, it extended along with it the use of its own form of speech. The French of Paris spread gradually over the conquered provinces. It came to be considered the exclusive language of culture and of literature, the language which every one spoke who looked upon himself as belonging to the higher classes. This had the inevitable effect of confining the previously independent tongues of the great provinces to the use of the peasantry. These tongues, therefore, became dialects, which the literary language no longer recognized as possessing any authority; or they even sank to that lower form of dialect, peculiar to certain districts or certain classes, which we call patois.

This was what took place in Normandy after its loss by the English crown in the early part of the thirteenth century. But, bad as the speech of Normandy might come to appear as compared with that of Paris, it would naturally seem far worse with that dialect after it had been transported to England, and cut off from direct communication with the same dialect on the Continent. Divergences would naturally arise. The Norman-French of the island would and did introduce words and forms that belonged to the varying dialects of the various provinces of the Continent that from time to time fell under the sway of the kings of England. It would be and it was affected by the pronunciation of the English of the native inhabitants.

Later it was subjected to the overshadowing influence of the French of Paris. It accordingly came to have a special development of its own.

Anglo-French, in consequence, was in many particulars unlike the provincial speech of Normandy or of any of the other dialects used on the Continent. During the course of the centuries, it was certain to deviate further and further from the French which had come to the front as the classic form of the language. It could not fail, therefore, to share in the depreciation which is always sure to overtake variations from what has become the standard form of the speech. Such would necessarily be its fate in France. Such was also its fate in England. References exist to the low estimate in which it was held in the fourteenth century in both countries. In the "Canterbury Tales," Chaucer introduces as one of the characters a Prioress, who is represented as paying special attention to form and ceremony. As a fashionable woman, she felt it incumbent to speak French, but was unable to speak what had then come to be regarded as pure French. He says: —

> And Frenssh she spak ful faire and fetysly,
> After the scole of Stratford-atte-Bowe,
> For Frenssh of Parys was to hire unknowe.

On the other hand, in the prologue to "The Testament of Love," written by a contemporary of Chaucer, and long imputed to him, there occurs a sentence which marks plainly the contemptuous opinion entertained

by the French of the debased Anglo-Norman dialect found in England. "In Latin and French," said the author, "hath many sovereign wits had great delight to endite, and have many noble things fulfilled; but certes there be some that speak their poesy matter in French, of which speech the Frenchmen have as good a fantasy as we have in hearing of Frenchmen's English."

General Adoption of English by all Classes. — All these agencies co-operated in bringing about the adoption of the native speech by all classes; yet at the end of the fourteenth century, while the success of English was well assured, its victory was even then far from complete. As was not unnatural, French, after it ceased to be necessary, came to be fashionable; and its use long survived its usefulness. In fact, it had been for centuries the language not only of law and of judicial proceedings, but also of official communications of all sorts. This continued to be the case after it had gone entirely out of use as the speech of any portion of the people. Nearly all the letters of Henry IV., who ruled from 1399 to 1413, are written in it or in Latin. Indeed, in the early part of the reign of that monarch it almost seems as if it were not considered respectful to address him in English. Letters to him are even found written in two languages. The writer begins in French, as if that were the correct thing to do, but, under the inability to express himself with sufficient clearness or urgency, passes over to the more familiar English.

There is even a more significant illustration of this feeling in a letter of the Scottish Earl of March, dated Feb. 18, 1400, in which he offered his services to the English king and entreated his support. At the close it contained an apology for being written in the English language. "And, noble prince," says the earl, "mervaile yhe nocht that I write my lettres in Englishe, fore that ys mare clere to myne understandyng than Latyne or Fraunche."

But, during the whole reign of Henry IV. and his successor Henry V. (1413–1422), the marks of growing unfamiliarity with French rapidly accumulate. One of the most striking instances of this is to be found, indeed, in the very earliest part of the fifteenth century, in the case of the negotiations that took place in 1404, between France and England, in regard to the outrages committed by each nation at sea. There were three ambassadors on the part of the latter power, one of whom was a professor of both the civil and the canon law. In a letter to the French Council, dated Sept. 1, 1404, they beg that the answer may be returned to them in Latin, and not in French. Again, in a letter of the 3d of October to the Duchess of Burgundy, they state, that although the treaties between England and France had been wont to be drawn up in French by the consent of the temporal princes concerned in them, who did not understand Latin as well as French, yet all the letters missive that had passed between the contracting parties had been written in the former tongue, as being the common

and vulgar idiom; and this custom they desire to have continued. Later on the reasons for these two requests are distinctly given. On the 21st of October, in acknowledging the reception of a communication from the French ambassadors, they complain of its being written in French, and state, that, for men unlearned as they are, it might as well have been put into Hebrew. It is a most striking proof of the general ignorance of French that had come to prevail in England, that ambassadors selected to carry on delicate and difficult negotiations, one of whom was a scholar by profession, should have been utterly unacquainted with the language of the people with which terms of settlement were to be made, — a language, moreover, which was still mainly used in official documents in their own country.

But during the whole of the fifteenth century this ignorance kept on steadily increasing among all classes. A necessary result was to substitute the native for the foreign speech in all the transactions of life, including, what is always the last to be altered, prescribed forms. It was sometimes the case that the higher orders changed their methods far sooner than those inferior to them in position. It was in the first half of this century that many of the London guilds began to have their regulations translated from French into English, and to use the latter tongue in keeping their books. A curious entry in the records of the Company of Brewers asserts directly that the greater part of the Lords and Commons had begun to have the

proceedings in which they were concerned written down in the native language. Furthermore, it seems to say that direct influence was exercised by King Henry V. to substitute the use of English for French. Of the entry, which is in Latin, the following is a translation: "*Whereas*, Our mother-tongue, to wit, the English tongue, hath in modern days begun to be honorably enlarged and adorned: for that our most excellent lord, King Henry the Fifth, hath, in his letters missive, and divers affairs touching his own person, more willingly chosen to declare the secrets of his will; and, for the better understanding of his people, hath, with a diligent mind, procured the common idiom (setting aside others) to be commended by the exercise of writing; and there are many of our craft of brewers who have the knowledge of writing and reading in the said English idiom; but in others, to wit, the Latin and French, before these times used, they do not in any wise understand; for which causes, with many others, it being considered how that the greater part of the Lords and trusty Commons have begun to make their matters to be noted down in our mother-tongue, we also in our craft, following in some manner their steps, have decreed in future so to commit to memory the needful things which concern us."

At last, towards the close of the fifteenth century, the laws enacted by Parliament were put into English. After the Conquest, they had usually been published in Latin; but in the reign of the first Edward (1272–1307), at the very period the French was

beginning to lose its hold upon the nation, it was introduced into the statutes. In these it gradually supplanted the Latin, and by the end of the fourteenth century the latter tongue was no longer used in legislative enactments. At the end of the fifteenth century, French, in turn, had given way to English. During the reign of Richard III. (1483–1485), the laws appear — at least in some instances — to have been written in both tongues. Early, however, in the reign of his successor, Henry VII., English began to be exclusively used. With this accomplished, the triumph of the popular speech may be called complete.

Scattered instances, it is true, of the employment of French can be found at a much later period. Instruction in the schools through the medium of that tongue had been generally given up, as we have seen, before the end of the fourteenth century. Yet it undoubtedly continued to survive for a long time in particular places. Even as late as the reign of Henry VIII. (1509–1547), at the time of the dissolution of the monasteries, it was still found taught in one of the conventual schools. A letter to Cromwell from John Ap Rice, one of the visitors of religious houses, relating to the monastery of Laycock in Wiltshire, mentions a form of French as still being used there which was certainly then used by no people to whom that tongue was a native speech. "The house," he says, "is very clean, well-repaired, and well-ordered: and one thing I observed worthy the advertisement (i.e.

notice) there. The Ladies have their Rule, the Institutes of their Religion, and the ceremonies of the same written in the French tongue, which they understand well, and are very perfitt in the same. Albeit that it varieth from the vulgar French that is now used, and is much like the French that the Common Law is written in."

It is likely indeed, that the efforts first to obtain and then to retain the English sovereignty of France, which went on in the earlier half of the fifteenth century, had a tendency to retard to some extent the general abandonment of the French speech. This at least was apparently the case with men belonging to the legal profession. These seem to have clung with special tenacity to that tongue. As late as 1549, Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, arguing with those who insisted that the mass should be celebrated in Latin, declared that he had "heard suitors murmur at the bar because their attorneys had pleaded their cases in the French tongue which they understood not." Still, instances of the kind just mentioned are nothing but accidental survivals. They are no evidence of the wide prevalence of that tongue in England at that time — no more so, in fact, than it would now be evidence of its prevalence in this country or in Great Britain, that the word *oyes* (Anglo-French, *oyez* 'hear ye') is still used in courts of law to proclaim silence, or that the words *La Reine* (or *Le Roi*) *le veut*, 'The Queen wills it,' are still the ones employed to signify the royal assent to an act of parliament.

CHAPTER V.

PERIODS IN THE HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE, AND THE CHANGES WROUGHT IN IT BY THE NORMAN CONQUEST.

WHAT was this popular speech, which, at the end of the fourteenth century, was for the first time manifesting its capability of becoming the vehicle of a great literature? It was certainly not the Anglo-Saxon. Between that and it had taken place a divergence even more profound and wide-reaching than that which marks the separation of French from its parent Latin. The tongue spoken or written by an Englishman of the tenth century would have been as unintelligible to an Englishman of the fourteenth as it is to an Englishman of the nineteenth. In the course of those four hundred years the language had not simply suffered modification, or undergone development, it had experienced revolution. Nor was this popular tongue precisely that which is found in the literature of to-day; though the differences between it and our present speech are differences of degree, and not of kind; or, to make use of the same form of statement already employed, they are differ-

ences that have arisen from modification and development, and not at all from revolution. To bring out the general nature of the divergence in grammar and vocabulary that came into being between the English of the tenth and eleventh centuries and that of the fourteenth will be the aim of the present chapter.

The Language before the Conquest. — Let us at this point recount briefly the results already reached. Up to the Norman Conquest the linguistic situation may be thus described: A Low-Germanic tongue was the speech of all the Teutonic inhabitants of Great Britain from the Channel to the Frith of Forth. It was called by those who then spoke it, *Englisc*, that is, 'English,' but is now styled by some Anglo-Saxon, by others Old English. In this tongue there existed several dialects. One of these, the West-Saxon, had become the language of law and of literature,— the language in which the educated classes talked and wrote. Into this language there had been introduced in the course of centuries a very slight number of Celtic and of Norse words, and a much larger number of Latin ones. But, notwithstanding these additions, it continued to be — what it had been, not merely as regards grammar, but also as regards vocabulary — essentially a Teutonic tongue.

The Language after the Conquest. — With the introduction of Norman-French, this state of affairs underwent a change. It was not that the Anglo-Saxon ceased to be a spoken language, or even a written one; but it did cease to be a cultivated one.

One result of this was, that the West-Saxon dialect sank speedily from its position of supremacy, and in process of time fell to the level of the other dialects which it had itself supplanted. The inevitable effect was, that the popular speech was left to run its own course, without any restraining influence whatever. Each district had words and forms and syntactical constructions and methods of pronunciation of its own, which were little known or used outside of its borders. Everything was in confusion.

Such a result as this is something that is always sure to occur when a cultivated tongue comes to be used exclusively by the uneducated or the partially educated. No standard of authority exists anywhere in it, which is felt to be binding upon all. The influence of the old literature has passed away; for it is embodied in a form of speech which has gone or is rapidly going out of use. As yet no great authors have risen to establish methods of expression to which the speech of the better class will be made to conform. There are few, if any, books written in this new developing tongue. There are but few persons to read those that are written. Learned almost wholly by the ear, and scarcely at all by the eye, the language is specially subject to the phonetic and linguistic changes of all kinds that rude and ignorant men may bring about by modifying pronunciation, by confounding declensions and conjugations, by disregarding syntactical laws, in short, by all the numerous processes of decay and regeneration to which a

living tongue is subject by the very fact of its being a living tongue. To such influences as these the native speech was exposed, with little check, after the Conquest; and it at once entered, in consequence, upon a series of rapid and violent changes.

These changes were of several kinds; but there were two principal ones. One of them was the loss of inflections in the native speech; the other, the introduction into it of French words. The latter is a direct result of the Conquest; the former, only an indirect one. This is clear from the fact that even before the Conquest the process of stripping the speech of its inflection had already begun to show itself. Furthermore, it has taken place on a large scale in the case of other Teutonic peoples, whose languages have been subject to none of the influences that follow subjugation by a foreign race speaking a foreign tongue. What, therefore, the introduction of Norman-French into England did was to hasten rapidly that abandonment of inflection by the English speech, which, in a greater or less degree, was certain to come some time. But besides this, it had a powerful influence upon the extent to which this abandonment took place. The inhabitants of the island were largely cut off by their position from contact with foreign nations. At the time of the French invasion they had developed a literature of their own. These two conditions would have concurred to prevent the loss of inflections on any extensive scale, had not the abolition of any standard of authority, result-

ing from the Conquest, thrown the native speech into a chaotic state and interfered throughout with its orderly development.

The changes that took place, as a result of the Conquest, indirectly in the inflectional system, and directly in the vocabulary, of the English tongue, were so numerous and great that it has been customary to give the language during several centuries different names. It is of itself a convincing proof of the confused and varying character of our early speech, that scarcely any two scholars have agreed upon the titles or dates of the periods which they have adopted. This is not at all to be wondered at. Scientific precision in such respects is not attainable in even the most cultivated and stable tongues. Dates in the history of a language are convenient for reference; they are worth little for accuracy of statement. Men do not use one form of speech one year, and a different form the following year. This, which is true of any tongue, no matter how marked the changes, is especially true of the earlier stages of our own, in which the changes were not merely rapid, but in which they were unequal in different parts of the country. The language of the North of England advanced much more quickly toward Modern English than the language of the South; and a statement, in consequence, which would be true of the one, might be grossly false of the other.

Periods of the English Language. — It is, accordingly, to be borne in mind that the titles and dates

about to be given are in themselves of no authority, and are used mainly as a matter of convenience; that the same terms, when employed by others, may not and often do not mean the same things; that other divisions, and an entirely different nomenclature, will be found in other works treating upon this same subject. In particular, there is a division and a nomenclature now frequently used, with which it may be important for the student to be familiar. According to this, the language down to 1100 — sometimes to 1150 — is termed Old English; from that date to about 1500, Middle English, and from 1500 to the present day, Modern English. With this understanding, it is only necessary to add that the following will be the names and limits of the periods into which, in this volume, English is divided: —

I. The Anglo-Saxon period will embrace that form of the language spoken from the first coming of the Saxons and Angles — that is, from the middle of the fifth century — to the middle of the century following the Norman conquest, — that is, to the year 1150.

II. The Old English period will embrace the form of the language spoken between 1150 and 1350.

III. Middle English will embrace the form of the language used between 1350 and 1550.

IV. Modern English will be the name given to the language as spoken from the middle of the sixteenth century to the present time.

The following schedule represents, accordingly, the

nomenclature of the periods, with their limits, as employed in this volume: —

I. Anglo-Saxon	450–1150
II. Old English	1150–1350
III. Middle English	1350–1550
IV. Modern English	1550–

Furthermore, when it is desired to use a general term covering the period between 1150 and 1550, the term "Early English" will be employed. This corresponds essentially with the period designated as the Middle English by those who apply to Anglo-Saxon the term Old English.

Literature of the Old English Period. — Of the literature of the Anglo-Saxon period, a slight account has already been given. In the Old English period there were composed a large number of works, many of which still exist only in manuscript. To a great extent they are translations from the French, or a working-over of French productions. As regards their subject-matter, they may be divided into the following classes: —

1. Religious works. Of these, one of the earliest and on the whole the most important is the "Ormulum," a poem without rhyme or alliteration, written about 1200, by an Augustinian monk named Ormin or Orm. It is essentially a life of Christ made up from the Gospels. It is marked by one peculiarity, which has made it of special importance in the history of English pronunciation. It intentionally car-

ries out one principle which has to some extent governed the spelling of our speech. This is the doubling of the consonant after a short vowel. Thus, for illustration, *and*, *under*, *taken*, *birth*, appear in this poem as *annd*, *unnderr*, *takenn*, and *birrth*, while *word*, *book*, *write*, and *right* are spelled as at present. There were also a number of works of a moral and religious character, both in prose and verse; homilies and homiletic treatises, some of which are of an earlier date than the "Ormulum"; legends of saints and martyrs; and versions of histories or parts of histories contained in the Bible, intermixed with narratives drawn from other sources.

2. Romances and legendary history. These may be said to begin with the "Brut," a poem composed about the same time as the "Ormulum" by a Worcestershire priest named Layamon. It is a chronicle, embodying that fabulous history of Britain, which for several centuries was accepted as true. The poem takes its name from a mythical Brutus, a great-grandson of Æneas, who collected the descendants of the Trojans that had been taken captive by the Greeks, freed them from their slavery, and after various adventures conducted them to Britain, which received from him its name. It then gives an account of the lives and actions of the legendary kings who succeeded, down to the occupation of the country by the Saxons. In this list of monarchs the names of Lear and Cymbeline have been made especially familiar to students of literature by the plays of Shakspeare.

The work of Layamon has been handed down in two versions, the first of which is dated about 1200, while the second is thought to be about fifty years later. Besides the "Brut," there is a long list of romantic narratives dealing with the fortunes of purely fictitious characters, such as Havelock, King Horn, Sir Bevis of Hampton, and the Knights of Arthur's Round Table, or with events largely fictitious in the lives of real personages, such as Alexander the Great, Charlemagne, and Richard I. of England.

3. Histories. These were in part fabulous, it is true, but not so deemed by their authors. They belong exclusively to the latter half of the Old English period, and consist of chronicles in verse by a writer commonly termed Robert of Gloucester, and by Robert Manning of Brunne. The work of the latter is a translation from the French of Pierre de Langtoft. Both of these writers treat of the history of Britain from the legendary coming of Brutus to a period near their own time; the former ending with the accession of Edward I. in 1272; the latter, with his death in 1307.

4. Shorter poems, either of a satirical or of a purely lyrical character. The latter are much the more abundant. The most conspicuous among these are "The Land of Cokaygne," the "Ule and Nihtegale" (the Owl and Nightingale), and a series of lyric poems of a political, devotional, or social nature. The works in all these classes are of the highest value to the student of the language; but it is only those of

this last class that have any claim whatever to literary excellence, and these are comparatively few in number.

Alliterative Verse. — One feature worthy of mention, that characterizes the Old English period, is the tendency to abandon alliteration, and substitute for it final rhyme. In Anglo-Saxon verse instances of rhyme are occasional, and probably often purely accidental; at any rate, it is only in a piece of eighty lines that it is deliberately employed throughout, and in that it is mixed with alliteration, with the result that no modern scholar has been successful in getting any coherent meaning out of the poem, or rather of putting any into it. It was not until after the Norman Conquest that rhyme came to be regularly employed. Even then it was apt to be more or less combined with alliteration, especially in the early part of the Old English period. Though it soon began to be discarded, the pure alliterative verse did not die out entirely till the sixteenth century. It maintained its ground in the North long after it had been disused in the South. Chaucer, in the "Canterbury Tales," comments on these distinguishing peculiarities of the two parts of the island, when, in the following lines, he represents the parish priest as preferring to say what he has to say in prose, instead of adopting either of the two forms of verse then in use: —

> But trusteth wel, I am a Southern man.
> I can not geste[1] — *rom, ram, ruf* — by lettre,
> Ne,[2] God wot, rym holde I but litel bettre.

[1] Compose a story. [2] Nor.

Yet in spite of the fact that alliterative verse was the favorite form of versification in the North, and did not die out till the sixteenth century, the most conspicuous work composed in it belongs to the fourteenth century, and to the dialect of the Midland. This is "The Vision of Piers Plowman." It exists in three versions, and the opening lines of the prologue in the first version will exemplify the character it had come to assume, as contrasted with the alliterative verse of the Anglo-Saxon period[1]: —

In a somer sesun · whon softe was þe sonne,
I schop me into a schroud · a scheep as I were;
In habite of an hermite · vnholy of werkes,
Wende I wydene in þis world · wondres to here.
Bote in a Mayes morwnynge · on Maluerne hulles
Me bifel a ferly · a feyrie, me þouhte;
I was weori of wandringe · and wente me to reste,
Vndur a brod banke · bi a bourne syde,
And as I lay and leonede · and lokede on the watres,
I slumberde in a slepyng · hit sownede so murie.[2]

[1] See page 30.

[2] In a summer season · when mild [soft] was the sun,
I put [shaped] me into a garment [shroud] · as if I were a shepherd;
In habit of a hermit · unholy of acts [works],
Went I wide about in this world · wonders to hear.
But on a May morning · on Malvern hills
There befell me a wonder · of fairy origin, methought.
I was weary of wandering · and went to rest me,
Under a broad bank · by the side of a stream [burn],
And as I lay and leaned · and looked on the waters,
I slumbered in a sleep · it sounded so merrily.

In the version here given the modern forms of the words, for which others are substituted, are added, enclosed in brackets.

The inferiority of alliterative verse to rhyme as an instrument of expression, led to its abandonment by all the Teutonic nations at comparatively early periods in their literary history.

Changes in Grammar between Anglo-Saxon and Middle English. — A more detailed account of the changes that took place in the grammatical structure after the Conquest will be found in the second part; here but a slight summary can be given. Comparisons can necessarily be made only between periods which have a standard literature of their own. Outside of these no general statements are trustworthy. The several dialects of English varied widely in the order and degree of their development, and therefore what is true of one at a particular time would be untrue of the rest. Grammatical forms which appear regularly in one author would not be found at all in another, writing at the very same time. Accordingly, comparison will in this particular case be made between the literary West-Saxon, and that dialect of English which was employed by the great writers of the fourteenth century. It was they who established the language of literature. Of them Chaucer, as the greatest of all, may be selected as the representative. Consequently it is his usage that will be taken as the standard by which the extent and character of the changes that had gone on are to be tested.

One further fact is to be borne in mind. Whatever may be the limits fixed upon for the periods in the history of any tongue, and whatever characteristics

may be attributed to these periods, assertions made in regard to them can only be true generally; they are always subject to specific exceptions. To illustrate this point, let us take *its*, the genitive of the neuter pronoun of the third person. It is not till the Modern English period that it came into existence. It took the place of *his*, which had been previously the neuter as well as masculine genitive. It would be right, therefore, to say that *his*, as the genitive of the neuter pronoun of the third person is not characteristic of Modern English. Yet, while this is true generally, it is so far from being true specifically, that *his* can be found where we should now use *its*, for a hundred years after the Modern English period begins. We meet with it in the works of Shakspeare and Milton, and it appears frequently in the authorized version of the Bible, as in verses like the following: "If the salt have lost *his* savor, wherewith shall it be salted?"

Let us begin, then, with the modifications which the inflectional system underwent. These are first brought to our knowledge by certain orthographical changes which took place in consequence of a change in pronunciation. Two of them are of special importance. One is the weakening into *e* of the vowels *a*, *o*, and *u* of the terminations. Thus, in Anglo-Saxon, *-an* is the regular ending of the infinitive: it was soon after the Conquest weakened into *-en*. 'To tell,' in the eleventh century was *tellan*: in the twelfth century it became *tellen*. So, in like manner, *ora*,

'ox,' became *oxe; oxan*, 'oxen,' became *oxen; stānas*, 'stones,' and *stōlas*, 'stools,' became *stanes* and *stoles; caru*, 'care,' became *care*. This was a change that was certain to happen in English, as in the other Teutonic languages, had the Norman-French never set foot in Britain. All the effect produced by their coming was to hasten its general adoption; and during the twelfth century it did become generally established.

The second change was the dropping of the final *-n*, —a peculiarity which the Northumbrian dialect, as has been seen (p. 46), exhibited at an early day. This, however, was much slower of general adoption than the weakening of the vowels *a*, *o*, and *u*. In truth, though common much earlier, it did not become thoroughly established till the latter part of the fifteenth century. This final *-n* can be found even in the sixteenth century or later, though it then survived merely as an archaism. Its gradual disappearance from the endings, working in conjunction with the weakening of the vowels *a*, *o*, and *u* just mentioned, had the effect of making the final *-e* the one termination of the Middle English which represented nearly all the terminations of the Anglo-Saxon that had been preserved at all. Accordingly, in the study of this one ending is involved the study of nearly the whole grammatical inflection of that period. It was, moreover, largely due to the steady reduction of all terminations to this single one, that the confusion sprang up in usage, which, in turn, led, in great

measure, to the rejection of inflection altogether. What there was left of it in the fourteenth century, compared with Anglo-Saxon, will be stated very briefly. There are exceptions to the universal applicability of the results to be here given, but they are neither numerous nor important.

In the noun, the two leading declensions of the Anglo-Saxon — the vowel or strong, and the consonant or weak [1] — with their several subordinate declensions, had been reduced to the one inflection seen in the masculine noun of the vowel declension. Distinction between the terminations of the nominative, dative, and accusative singular had practically disappeared. The only case which had a form of its own was the genitive, which ended in *-es*. This unifying process had gone on even more thoroughly in the plural. All the four cases had there been reduced to a common form, which is, as now, the same as that of the genitive singular. This *-es* of the genitive singular and of the plural usually formed a distinct syllable in pronunciation, at least in monosyllabic nouns. Thus *kings* would be pronounced as *kingès*.

The adjective in Anglo-Saxon was very rich in inflections. By the latter part of the fourteenth century it had been nearly stripped of them. All that was left to represent the numerous terminations that once existed was the final *-e*, and this was not used extensively. Its main employment was to distinguish the plural from the singular.

[1] See Part II., secs. 24, 25, and 27.

Thus, while in the latter number we should have *old man*, in the former we should have *oldè men*. Obviously even this distinction could not prevail in the case of adjectives, such as *newe*, *grene*, *blithe*, which themselves ended in *-e*. The disappearance of the terminations led also to the disappearance of the difference between the two original declensions of the adjective, — the definite and the indefinite.[1] A trace of the former continued to manifest itself in the addition of *e* in certain cases to the singular. For illustration, the adjective preceded by *the*, or a demonstrative pronoun, would end in *-e*. To make use of the example given above, we should, when using the definite declension, say *the* or *that oldè man*. This grammatical form was still common at the beginning of the Middle English period.

The personal pronouns and the interrogative *who* (A. S. *hwā*) were somewhat more fortunate in preserving their inflection. They retained a distinct form for the case which we now call the objective; and this was founded upon the original dative, the original accusative having been given up. The difference of form between these two cases had even during the Anglo-Saxon period begun to disappear in the pronouns of the first and the second person. Thus the original accusatives *mec* and *usic* were then frequently replaced by the datives *mē* and *ūs*.[2] This tendency was carried on still further after the Conquest, and was extended to the pronoun of the third

[1] See Part II., secs. 69–73. [2] Ib. secs. 103, 110, and 134.

person. Accordingly *hine*, the accusative of *hē* was, replaced by the dative *him*. In a similar way *hwone*, the original accusative of the interrogative *hwā*,[1] gave way to *hwām*, 'whom.' The only exception to the universality of this rule was in the case of the neuter pronoun of the third person, in which the original accusative *hit*, 'it,' became the objective. This was due, however, to the fact that its original dative *him* had come to be limited to the masculine.

A further loss was the dual number, which in Anglo-Saxon survived to a certain extent in the pronouns of the first and second persons.[2] This had disappeared entirely, and at a comparatively early period. Furthermore, in the case of the pronouns of the third person, *hī* or *hēo*, the earlier form for the nominative plural had been abandoned, and its place was supplied by *they*, or *thei*, strictly the plural of a demonstrative pronoun. Accordingly in Chaucer the inflection of this plural is *they*, *here*, 'their,' *hem*, 'them.' Pronouns which had inflections resembling those of the adjective had been stripped of them in the same manner as they.

In the case of the verb, while the distinction between the two leading conjugations still continued to exist as now, the barriers between the subordinate conjugations under each had been largely broken down. Again, the verbs of the strong or old conjugation — that is, verbs like *drive*, *drove*, which add nothing to form the preterite, and suffer vowel change

[1] See Part II., sec. 134. [2] Ib. sec. 103.

— had in vast numbers passed over to the weak conjugation, that is, to verbs like *light, lighted*, which take an additional syllable or letter to form the preterite. The inflections, to some extent, were still retained; thus, for illustration, *they tell* was *they tellen* or *they tellè*. The use of compound verb-phrases, such as *I have told, I shall tell*, had been vastly extended. In particular, at this very time, the employment of *do* and *did* with the infinitive — as in *I do give, I did give* — was just beginning to come into use.

A consideration of these statements shows that Middle English differs but slightly in its grammatical structure from the English of to-day. In fact, no small proportion of the difficulty that the modern reader at first encounters in examining the literature of this period is due merely to difference of orthography. A passage from Chaucer in the original spelling, and in modern spelling so far as it can be employed, will illustrate better than pages of description the essential likeness, and the extent of the unlikeness, that prevail between the language of the fourteenth century and that of the nineteenth. Furthermore, when it is compared with the specimens of the English of the Anglo-Saxon period, found on pp. 30, 33, it will show clearly how wide was the chasm that separated the language of the fourteenth century from that of the eleventh.

In the modernized version of the following passage from the beginning of the Wife of Bath's tale, as told

in the "Canterbury Tales," the pronunciation of syllables no longer sounded is marked by the sign ` ; the accentuation of syllables either not accented or not sufficiently accented now is marked by the sign ' ; while the insertion of a hyphen between syllables shows that they are all to be pronounced.

"In thol le dayes of the Kyng Arthour,
Of which that Britons speken greet honour,
Al was this land fulfild of fayerie;
The elf queen with hir joly compaignye,
Daunced ful ofte in many a grene mede;
This was the olde opinion, as I rede.
I speke of manye hundred yeres ago;
But now kan no man se none elves mo.
For now the grete charitee and prayeres
Of lymytours and othere hooly freres,
That serchen every lond and every streem,
As thikke as motes in the sonne beem,
Blessynge halles, chambres, kichenes, boures,
Citees, burghes, castels, hye toures,
Thropes, bernes, shipnes, dayeryes,
This maketh that ther been no fairyes.
For ther as wont to walken was an elf,
Ther walketh now the lymytour hym self,
In undermeles and in morwenynges,
And seyth his matyns and his hooly thynges
As he gooth in his lymytacioun.
Wommen may go now saufly up and doun,
In every bussh or under every tree;
There is noon other incubus but he."

"In th' oldè dayès of the King Arthoúr,
Of which that Britons speakèn great honoúr,
All was this land fulfilled of fa-è-ry;

The elf-queen, with her jolly company,
Dancèd full oft in many a greenè mead;
This was the old opinion, as I read.
I speak of many hundred years ago;
But now can no man see none elvès mo.
For now the greatè charity and prayérès
Of limiters[1] and other holy frerès,
That searchèn every land and every stream,
As thick as motès in the sunnè-beam,
Blessing hallès, chambers, kitchenès, bowers,
Cities, boroughs, castles, highè towers,
Thorpès,[2] barnès, shipnès,[3] da-ì-riés,
This maketh that there be no fa-ì-riés.
For there as wont to walkèn was an elf,
There walketh now the limiter himself,
In undermelès[4] and in morwènýngès,[5]
And saith his matins and his holy thingès
As he goth in his lim-i-tá-tì-ón.
Women may go now safely up and down,
In every bush or under every tree;
There is none other incubus but he."

Change in the Vocabulary. — Such is a brief outline of the principal changes that took place in the inflectional system of the English tongue. Many of them would doubtless have happened had there been no Norman Conquest; but to that event were certainly due both the rapidity with which, and the extent to which, they were carried out. But the second great change we have to consider was a direct result of the Conquest. This was the introduction of foreign words into the vocabulary. It was a process which,

[1] A begging friar, assigned a certain limit for begging.
[2] Villages. [3] Stables. [4] Afternoons. [5] Mornings.

in certain respects, transformed the character of our speech.

The coming of the Normans into England brought two languages into close geographical connection. French, as has been pointed out, was the speech of the higher classes, English, that of the great body of the people. Yet for two centuries these tongues existed side by side, without the latter borrowing words, to any extent, from the former. It is not necessary to assume that this condition of things was due to any hostility between the races, or to any disinclination on the part of the conquered people to use the language of their conquerors. On the contrary, an opposite state of feeling prevailed in both respects. There was undeniably contempt felt and expressed at times for the native population, especially by those members of the higher classes whose interests were largely on the Continent. Not so with those who were born and brought up in the island, and looked upon it as their permanent home. Between them and the native English the fusion of races had gone on rapidly. Even in the twelfth century it was not always possible to tell whether any particular person, if a freeman, was of Norman or of English descent. Such, at least, is the assertion of Richard, bishop of London, in his treatise entitled *Dialogus de Scaccario*, 'Dialogue on the Exchequer.' This work was written, as he tells us, in the 23d year of Henry II., that is, in 1177, when he was treasurer of the exchequer. "Now," he says, "in consequence

of the English and the Normans dwelling together, and marrying and giving in marriage wives from among each other, the peoples are so mixed, that it can scarcely be told at the present day — I am speaking of freemen — who is of the English and who of the Norman race." Consequently the failure to borrow words from the French can hardly be imputed to hostility on the part of the English. The explanation of the course they took is really very simple. They did not employ any new words because they did not need them; the existing stock of terms was amply sufficient to convey all the knowledge they sought to impart, or to express the few new ideas to which they gave birth.

At any rate, the fact of little borrowing cannot be disputed. The "Brut" of Layamon was composed nearly a hundred and fifty years after the Conquest. It is a poem containing thirty-two thousand short lines, and yet there are in it hardly a hundred words of Norman-French origin. The proportion is much less in the "Ormulum," — a composition of about the same date, and containing nearly twenty thousand short lines. During the century that followed, the accessions from foreign sources are neither extensive nor important. Naturally, the number of French words adopted into English speech became more and more as time went on; and at every period since its introduction it has always varied with the nature of the subject-matter; but, down to the end of the thirteenth century, the additions that had come from this

quarter to the native speech formed only a very small percentage of the whole.

It was in the last half-century of the Old English period — that is, from 1300 to 1350 — that a great change took place in this respect. It was during those years that the higher classes of the island may be said to have generally abandoned the French speech, and to have adopted that of the mass of the people. This could hardly have happened on the rapid and extensive scale it did, had not the English been for a long time already the real mother-tongue of the nobility as well as of the commonalty. French was indeed the language which the former class had been in the habit of using; but it was none the less a foreign tongue. The pressure which had made it a necessity for every one to learn it, had been steadily growing more and more irksome. It was merely a question of time when the burden would be thrown off by the large majority, and the acquisition of the French language would be left only to those who had special reasons for becoming acquainted with it. This was what actually took place at the period indicated.

It was natural and indeed inevitable that the classes which had been in the habit of employing French, should bring into the speech they had adopted as their own, many of the words with which they were most familiar. Especially would this be true of terms descriptive of their habits and customs and ways of life, or expressive of thoughts and feelings

peculiar to themselves. For many of these the native English would have no precise equivalent. Nor if it had, would the terms it furnished be recommended by their associations. Hence, it happened that during the half-century mentioned a vast multitude of words came from the French into the English. What had been left of the grammatical inflection was Teutonic; but the vocabulary from this time assumed that mixed character which has ever since been one of its marked peculiarities. Even in the earliest writers of the Middle English period, the foreign words constitute one-half of the whole number they employ; and the proportion has remained essentially unchanged from that time to the present. Such a statement is, of course, based upon the special glossary of an author in which a word that occurs but once in his writings counts for as much as one that is used by him a thousand times. The article *the*, for illustration, is found in nearly every sentence of Shakspeare; but in estimating his whole vocabulary, it is reckoned for no more than, for instance, *cousin-german* or *fanatical*, either one of which appears only once in all his writings. On the other hand, in estimating the frequency with which Teutonic or Romance words are used in any particular work or passage, there has never been a period in which, or a writer in whom, the former element has not vastly exceeded the latter.

This large accession of French words is technically called the "Latin of the Third Period"; but it is

widely different in character from any accession from that quarter the speech had previously received. Unlike these, it entered into and modified the whole framework of expression, and profoundly influenced the course which the language was to take in reference to future additions to its vocabulary. Other Teutonic tongues may make use of Romance words: the English must make use of them, even in denouncing them. This is an essential distinction, which may be disregarded, but cannot be denied; and it had its origin in that change in the nature of the language which was a direct result of the vast irruption of French terms in the fourteenth century. Has this change been a benefit, or an injury? This question has given rise to much controversy, and is, from its nature, one that can never be settled to the satisfaction of all. In this place it is only important to point out the principal losses which the speech suffered as a consequence of the alteration in its character.

Losses of Middle English as compared with Anglo-Saxon. — The first of these was the loss of native words. Language is always economical, and is not long disposed to retain terms and expressions of which it has no real need. When, therefore, two different words — the one of Anglo-Saxon, the other of French origin, but both meaning precisely the same thing — came to exist side by side, one of two results was certain to happen in the majority of instances. First, both terms would be retained, and a

distinction would be made in their signification. Secondly, if no such use could be made of both, or, as a matter of fact, was not made, one of them was fairly sure to be dropped. In a large number of cases it was the native word that was rejected, in the speech of the fourteenth century, and the foreign one that was retained. It is probably an under rather than an over estimate to assert that more than one-half of the Anglo-Saxon vocabulary has been lost to Modern English; and the place of it has necessarily been supplied, whether for good or ill, by importations from alien sources.

A second and perhaps more serious blow to the resources of the language was the loss of a large number of formative prefixes and suffixes. By the addition of the former of these, the meaning of the word is modified. By the addition of the latter, not only is the meaning modified, but the word itself is usually changed from one part of speech into another. In these elements the original speech abounded. It possessed, in consequence, almost unlimited power in the creation of new terms from native roots. Thus from the Anglo-Saxon *flōwan*, 'to flow,' ten new compounds were formed by the addition of various prefixes, of which ten, only one, *oferflōwan*, 'to overflow,' survives with us. In a similar manner, from the verb *sittan*, 'to sit,' thirteen new verbs were formed, of which not a single one is to be found to-day. Even in some instances where a prefix has been retained in certain words, the power of employ-

ing it to form new ones has been given up. Thus ***with*** is still found in ***withdraw, withhold, withstand,*** and the somewhat archaic ***withsay.*** But we no longer employ it to form new words by prefixing it to other verbs than these; whereas, originally, it could have been compounded with almost any verb, and was actually compounded with about thirty.

Again, the Anglo-Saxon was comparatively rich in formative suffixes. Many more of these suffixes have been preserved in Modern English than of the prefixes. Some, indeed, are as much employed now as in the earliest speech. Among those still commonly used to form new nouns are *-er* (A. S. *-ere*), as in *do-er* from the verb *do; -ing* (A. S. *-ung, -ing*), as in *learn-ing* from the verb *learn; -ness* (A. S. *-nes, -nis*), as in *firm-ness* from the adjective *firm; -hood* (A. S. *-hād*), as in *man-hood* from the noun *man;* and *-ship* (A. S. *-scipe*), as in *friend-ship* from the noun *friend.* Of those used to form new adjectives the terminations *-ful* (A. S. *-full*), *-ish* (A. S. *-isc*), *-less* (A. S. *-lēas*), and *-y* (A. S. *-ig*) are among the most common, and can be exemplified in the words *care-ful, thiev-ish, redd-ish, hope-less,* and *snow-y.* The ending *-ly* or *-like* (A. S. *-lic*) is also constantly used still to form new adjectives or adverbs, especially the latter, as may be seen in *friend-ly, god-like,* and *open-ly.* There are others such as *-dom* (A. S. *-dom*) and *-ed* (A. S. *-ede*), exemplified in *king-dom,* and *horn-ed,* which likewise continue to be employed, though with less frequency. Furthermore, the use of some of these

terminations has been extended in Modern English. In Anglo-Saxon *-hād*, the present *-hood*, and *-lēas*, the present *-less*, were used only with nouns; whereas they are now sometimes added, in the one case to adjectives, as in *false-hood*, and in the other case to verbs, as in *daunt-less*. Still, though several of these endings have survived, many have either passed out of use entirely, or are no longer employed to create new words.

The third loss was in the power of forming self-explaining compounds. In this respect the Anglo-Saxon rivalled the modern German. Thus *carpenter* could with them be expressed by *trēow-wyrhta*, 'tree-wright,' or 'worker in wood'; *butcher*, by *flǣsc-mangere*, 'flesh-monger,' or 'dealer in flesh'; *library* by *bōchūs*, 'book-house.' Hundreds of other illustrations could easily be given of the facility and freedom with which men then employed the power of combining familiar words to form new ones. Many of these compounds went out of use early. Others disappeared in the fourteenth century in consequence of words with an equivalent meaning having been taken from the French. The mere loss of these was not in itself so serious a detriment, however, as the indisposition, which sprang up in consequence, to form or to employ self-explaining compounds when their places could be readily supplied by borrowing.

This indisposition, not to say aversion, can be plainly traced in the history of the language from the beginning of the Middle English period to the pres-

ent time. Thus, for illustration, the Anglo-Saxon *sunnan-stede* appears later as *sun-stead*, that is, the sun's stopping-place; and was used to denote that part of the ecliptic in which the sun is farthest from the equator. In lieu of this, we now go to the Latin *solstitium*, formed of two words similar in meaning to the corresponding English ones, and from it derive the term *solstice*. By this we certainly lose something in picturesqueness and force of expression, though we may possibly gain in precision. Or an illustration from the present period can be employed. A certain liquid substance exuding in various ways from the earth needs a name. Seen oozing from the crevices of a rock, it is naturally called *rock-oil*, a term, to all appearance, sufficiently definite to distinguish it from all other kinds of oil. Yet, instead of using this, we go to the Latin *petra*, 'rock,' and *oleum*, 'oil,' and *rock-oil* appears as *petroleum*, — a word, the meaning of which must be learned before it is understood. Processes like these are constantly going on. In the case of scientific words they may be considered necessary; for it is of the utmost importance that a technical term should convey to the minds of all one idea, and but one idea, — that its signification should be imposed upon it, and not be suggested by it. This power of forming self-explaining compounds can, however, hardly be said to be lost: it is rather a power held in abeyance, dwarfed by disuse, but by no means destroyed.

These changes may seem to have seriously impaired the value of the language. To a certain extent it may be admitted that they have been detrimental; but they have been far less so than they appear. It would, indeed, be a mistake to suppose that there have not been great gains made, as well as great losses suffered. If one method of expression is denied language, another is speedily found to take its place. If many words belonging to the Anglo-Saxon have disappeared from the tongue now spoken, their places have been more than supplied by importations from foreign sources. These have now become so thoroughly identified with the words that have come from the original speech, that, in a large number of cases, no one but the special student is conscious of any difference in their origin. In particular, the introduction of the Romance element in the fourteenth century had the immediate effect of adding to the language a large number of terms having precisely the same meaning as those already existing. In many instances both have been retained, and a difference in meaning or use has gradually grown up. The readers of Scott's novel of "Ivanhoe" will recall the conversation between Wamba the fool and Gurth the swineherd, in which the former points out that *swine* and *ox* and *calf* go by their English names while living, but when served up as food, on the table of the Norman noble, become *pork* and *beef* and *veal*. Here is a clear distinction which has been made between words that had originally the same sense.

The same process has gone on in numerous other cases, and is still continuing to go on. In certain instances, such as *yearly* and *annual*, *hearty* and *cordial*, *shire* and *county*, *answer* and *reply*, *buy* and *purchase*, the distinction is hardly perceptible, or at least, definable. In others, like *body* and *corpse*, *ghost* and *spirit*, *room* and *chamber*, *ship* and *vessel*, *spring* and *fountain*, it is either clearly recognizable already, or is on the way towards becoming plainly marked. It is only prejudice or ignorance that will deny that these importations have added immensely to the resources of the language. Especially is this true of its capability of representing delicate shades of thought, and the higher and more complex relations which exist between the conceptions of the mind. In this respect the borrowed words stand in decided contrast to the native ones. To these latter is mainly left the representation of all deep feeling. The language of the reasoning faculties is, in consequence, largely different with us from the language of the emotional faculties, with the advantage to the former, that it gains by this in precision, and to the latter, that it gains in vividness and power.

Equally, the places of the lost Anglo-Saxon affixes have been supplied by affixes that have been borrowed from other languages, particularly the French, the Latin, and the Greek. These have been introduced in large numbers, and are freely used to form new words. For illustration, such prefixes as *anti* in *anti-climax*, *dis* in *dis-possess*, *inter* in *inter-mix*, *non*

in *non-essential*, *sub* in *sub-acid*, *super* in *super-natural*, *trans* in *trans-Atlantic*, and *ultra* in *ultra-radical* can be applied to numerous words. The same statement is true of suffixes like the *-al* of *nation-al*, the *-able* of *eat-able*, the *-ism* of *patriot-ism*, the *-ist* of *organ-ist*, and the *-ize* of *lion-ize*. There are many other affixes that could be mentioned. Furthermore, the giving up of the original formative endings has been largely and perhaps wholly counterbalanced in Modern English by the facility with which the simple words themselves now pass from one part of speech to another. Thus *black* is an adjective; but it is used likewise as a noun and a verb. Again, *stone* is a noun; but it is also a verb, and may be used with the attributive sense of an adjective, as, for instance, in *stone house* and *stone jar*. The wide employment of the substantive in the manner last designated, which forms one of the most striking peculiarities of Modern English, far more than offsets any loss due to the lack of facility in forming self-explaining compounds.

There result, indeed, from the union of the foreign and native elements, a wealth of phraseology and a many-sidedness in English, which give it in these respects a superiority over any other modern cultivated tongue. German is strictly a pure Teutonic speech; but no native speaker of it claims for it any superiority over the English as an instrument of expression, while many are willing to concede its inferiority. At any rate, the character of the language,

whether for good or ill, was fixed for all succeeding time at the beginning of the Middle English period. We may grieve over it, or we may rejoice over it; but we cannot change it. What it then became under the hand of the great writers who moulded it, that it has since continued essentially to be, and that it will be certain to remain so long as it lasts, in its present form, as a spoken and written tongue.

CHAPTER VI.

THE THREE DIALECTS OF EARLY ENGLISH, AND THE RISE OF THE MIDLAND.

IT has already been remarked that the dialect in which Chaucer wrote became the language of literature, and has remained as such until this day. What was this dialect? How came it to be employed by him? What was its relation to other dialects, or to the ancient tongue from which, in a certain sense, it may be said to have descended? The answers to these questions cannot be fully understood without having clearly in mind the circumstances under which this dialect originated, and the conditions under which it came to the front. Here, then, is a favorable point to recapitulate briefly but connectedly, what has been said elsewhere at length but in scattered passages.

Of the various dialects existing during the Anglo-Saxon period, that is, from 450 to 1150, the West-Saxon was the one that attained to literary supremacy. Enough exists of the form of language spoken in the ancient kingdom of Northumbria to make it certain that the speech of the North of England varied in many respects from that of the South. But, as the

West-Saxon is the only one of the earliest English dialects that can be said to have both maintained and preserved a literature, it is for us the literary Anglo-Saxon, the sole remaining type of our tongue in its original classical form. But from this position of supremacy the Norman Conquest had the speedy effect of displacing it. After that event its special forms and inflections, its peculiarities of grammatical construction, could not be long looked upon as the standard of correct writing and speaking. Such a standard could only be maintained by an educated class; and the attention of the educated classes was from this time turned exclusively either to Latin or to French. The West-Saxon, as an inevitable consequence, sank to the level of the other dialects: it had no longer any special pre-eminence of its own. Henceforward he who wrote in the native language wrote in that form of it with which he was most familiar. He wrote in the dialect of the district of country in which he had been brought up, or in which he dwelt. As, therefore, nothing existed anywhere that could be regarded as authority, the forces that tend to bring about diversity of speech were sure to gain strength more rapidly than those which tend to bring about uniformity.

The Three Early English Dialects. — During these centuries, therefore, — the twelfth, the thirteenth, and the fourteenth, — it is to be borne in mind that there was in no sense a national tongue. There existed a number of dialects, each one of which had as much

right as any of the others to be called the English language. The points of similarity were naturally far greater in number and in importance than the points of dissimilarity. In spite of that, the latter were sufficient to make the variations between these dialects observable by all. Especially marked was the difference between the speech of the North and that of the South of England. This at once came to the surface as soon as the pressure was withdrawn that had brought all the previously existing dialects under the supremacy of the West-Saxon.

This particular difference had existed from the earliest period; but it only became prominent when all dialects were brought to a common level of comparison by sharing in a common degradation. But little more than half a century had passed after the Conquest, when the chronicler, William of Malmesbury (1095–1148), asserted that the speech of the Northumbrians, especially at York, sounded so rude and harsh to the men of the South, that the latter were scarcely able to understand it. Similar testimony to this divergence is borne by Giraldus Cambrensis, a scholar who flourished not much later. About 1194 he finished a work in Latin, giving an account of Wales. In the course of it he incidentally pointed out a fact which is now universally recognized as true. He remarked that the language of Southern England was more ancient in its character than that of the northern parts, and much closer to the original tongue as preserved in writing.

Upon this point we have again precise and positive testimony from Higden, the writer of the first half of the fourteenth century who has already been quoted on this question of language. He asserted distinctly the existence of three leading dialects in his time. These are his statements, as translated by Trevisa: —

"Also Englysch men, þey3 hy hadde fram þe bygynnyng þre maner speche, Souþeron, Norþeron, and Myddel speche (in þe myddel of þe lond), as hy come of þre maner people of Germania; noþeless, by commyxstion and mellyng, furst wiþ Danes and afterward wiþ Normans, in menye þe contray longage ys apeyred, and some vseþ strange wlaffyng, chyteryng, harryng and garryng, grisbittyng. [By these five words Trevisa translates the Latin *boatus et garritus*] . . . Also, of þe forseyde Saxon tonge þat ys deled a þre, and ys abyde scarslych with feaw vplondysch men, and ys gret wondur; for men of þe est wiþ men of þe west, as hyt were vndur þe same party of heuene, acordeþ more in sounyng of speche þan men of the norþ wiþ men of the souþ; þerfore hyt ys þat Mercij, þat buþ men of Myddel Engelond, as hyt were parteners of þe endes, vndurstondeþ betre þe syde longages, Norþeron and Souþeron, than Norþeron and Souþeron vndurstondeþ eyþer oþer."[1]

[1] "Also Englishmen, though they had from the beginning three kinds of speech, Southern, Northern, and Midland speech (in the middle of the land), as they came from three kinds of people of Germany, nevertheless, by mixing and mingling, first with Danes and afterward with Normans, in many the native language is corrupted, and some use strange babbling, chattering, growling and snarling, teeth-grinding . . . Also, in regard to the aforesaid Saxon tongue, that is divided into three, and has remained [in use] with [a] few country-men, there is great wonder; for men of the East with men of the West, as it were under the same portion of heaven, agree more in the sound of [their] speech than men of the North with men of the South; therefore it is that the Mercians, that are

The extant writings of this period bear ample witness to the truth of Higden's statement. There were, especially during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and even earlier, three great divisions of English speech. The differences between these were so pronounced, that the dwelling-place of a man within certain limits could be immediately told by his language. The distinction is traceable now without difficulty in the works that have been handed down. It was as fully recognized then. Chaucer, for illustration, wrote in the Midland dialect of the eastern counties, and exemplified regularly in his writings all its peculiar grammatical characteristics. For instance, he forms the third person singular of the present tense of the verb in *-th*, the plural in *-en* or *-e*. Consequently he would say, for example, *he loveth* and *they loven* or *they lovè*. But in "The Reeve's Tale" he introduces two characters who are described as coming from a town "far in the North"; and the special peculiarities of that dialect are designedly represented in the forms they use. In the language put into their mouths the third person singular of the present tense ends in *-s*, as generally in Modern English: the plural has likewise the same termination. Other characteristics of the speech of the North occur such as the use of *a* for *o*, as in *ga*, *ham(e)*, *hald*, *nat*, *sang;* of *til* for *to;* and of *sal* for *shal*. Specifically, also, a variety of the

men of Middle England, as it were partners of the ends, understand better the border languages, Northern and Southern, than Northern or Southern understands each one the other."

Northern dialect is exemplified, in which *is* is found in the first and second persons of the present tense of the substantive verb. The following lines show specimens of all these peculiarities: —

> Oure manciple,[1] I hope,[2] he will be deed,[3]
> Swa[4] werkes ay the wanges[5] in his heed;
> And forthy[6] is I come, and eek Alayn,
> To grynde oure corn, and carie it ham agayn.
>
> Yit saugh I nevere, by my fader kyn,
> How that the hopur wagges til and fra.
>
> I is as ill a miller as are ye.
>
> I have herd seyd, 'Man sal taa[7] of twa thynges,
> Slyk[8] as he fyndes, or taa[7] slyk[8] as he brynges.'

No student of the earlier form of our language would think of attributing these lines to any other dialect than that of the North. Their introduction into a tale written in the Midland speech shows that the distinctive peculiarities of each were fully understood then. The divergence, indeed, was not only generally recognized, it was also so deeply marked, that it may almost be said that works composed in either of the two extreme dialects required to be translated into the other in order to be understood. A well-known early English poem, the "Cursor Mundi," was written about the end of the thirteenth century in the language of the North. One story in it was taken, however, from

[1] Purveyor. [2] Expect. [3] Be deed = die.
[4] So. [5] Cheek-teeth. [6] Therefore.
[7] Take. [8] Such.

a work composed in the dialect of the South; and the author of the "Cursor Mundi" speaks of the latter speech in words which would almost lead one to think that he looked upon it as a foreign tongue; for, after mentioning his authority, he goes on to say: —

> "In a writt this ilke I fand,
> Himself it wroght I understand.
> In Suthrin Englijs was it draun,
> And I haue turned it till vr aun
> Langage of the northren lede,
> That can nan other Englis rede."[1]
>
> *Lines* 20059–64.

Geographical Limits of the Three Dialects. — The geographical limits of these divisions of English speech may be roughly stated as follows: 1. The Northern dialect, as the lineal descendant of the Northumbrian dialect of Anglo-Saxon, covered about the same extent of territory; that is, the region stretching from the Humber on the south to the Frith of Forth on the north, and bounded by the Pennine Mountains on the west. It consequently included the present counties of York, Durham, and Northumberland in England, and the Lowlands of Scotland, except in the south-west. During the four-

[1] "In a writing this same [thing] I found;
He himself composed it, I understand.
In Southern English was it composed,
And I have turned it to our own
Language of the northern people,
That can read no other English."

teenth and fifteenth centuries, and later, it was, however, making its way throughout the whole of Scotland, and slowly supplanting the native Celtic tongue, though it never succeeded in doing this completely. Still, at a comparatively early period, it had advanced far to the north along the eastern coast. The only one of the various sub-dialects of the Northern dialect, that became a literary speech, was the Lowland Scotch. But after the union, in 1603, of Scotland and England under a common king, that itself sank to the position of a dialect of standard English.

2. The Midland dialect occupied the central counties from the Humber to the Thames, and the district west of the Pennine range of hills. It was doubtless the descendant of the Mercian of the Anglo-Saxon period which covered substantially the same territory. From the outset it was divided into two distinct varieties, called respectively from the regions of country wherein they were spoken, the East Midland and the West Midland. Of these, the former stretched over a much larger district, and was altogether more important both for its linguistic influence and for the character of the literature that was written in it.

3. The Southern stretched from the Thames to the English Channel. It also extended to portions of the western counties north of the Thames, particularly Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, and Worcestershire. It was a direct descendant of the West-Saxon, the classical language of our fathers, though it occasionally exhibits forms for which there is nothing correspond-

ing to be found in the monuments that have been preserved of the earliest speech. Kentish may have been originally very different; but as we find it in the Old English period, it is only a strongly marked variety of the Southern dialect.

It is not to be understood, indeed, that there were not variations, and great variations, everywhere within these lines. As there was then no uniform standard English, so there was no uniform Northern, or Midland, or Southern dialect. Under each one of these was included a number of sub-dialects, with special peculiarities of their own, and often confined to comparatively small districts. Thus the *I is* and the *thou is*, given above in Chaucer's representation of the Northern dialect, would be a grammatical form true of only a portion of the region covered by that particular kind of English. It would be very far from being true of all of it, and probably of most of it. All, therefore, that is meant to be implied is that within these three great divisions the differences were slight compared with the resemblances.

It was the language of the North and that of the South, as is stated by Higden, that stood the farthest apart. Between these two wavered the dialect of the Midland counties; sometimes and in some places inclining to the one, at other times and in other places inclining to the other. Each one of the three called itself the English speech, but did not deny the title to the others. Each one of the three also acted upon the speech of that other with which it came into

immediate contact. Thus the East Midland affected the dialect of the South, and the Southern in turn affected the East Midland. For instance, the Southern plural ending in *-th* of the present tense — as *they hopeth* — made its appearance in works written in the Eastern Midland. Again, the Northern termination in *-s* of the second and third person singular of the present tense is often found in the West Midland. Accordingly we should have, for illustration, in this speech, *thou gives* and *he gives* in place of the Eastern Midland and Southern *thou givest* and *he giveth.*

But one important thing these dialects had in common. The influx of French words into their vocabulary was about the same in each, and occurred at about the same period. On whatever other points they differed, here they agreed. The Norman Conquest did not bring Scotland under the sway of a foreign race, nor were the Scottish Lowlands parcelled out among a body of nobles who spoke a strange tongue; yet French words penetrated at about the same time, and to about the same extent, not only into the English spoken on both sides of the Humber, which divided the Northern dialect from the Midland, but also into the English spoken on both sides of the Tweed, which divided the two kingdoms. In the fourteenth century the language of Barbour, the Archdeacon of Aberdeen, shows as much the trace of French influence as does that of his contemporary Chaucer, the controller of the port of London. The

introduction into our tongue of the Romance element was in no sense peculiar to the speech of any one dialect or any one district of country; it was a general linguistic movement, which extended to every place where English was spoken at all.

Differences between the Dialects. — It is obviously the differences between the two extreme dialects that are most marked, and to these the attention will be mainly directed. There was, in the first place, one great radical distinction between the speech of the North and of the South. The latter was extremely conservative in holding on to its grammatical inflections; the former let them go rapidly. In the general break-up of the Anglo-Saxon that followed the Conquest, it was impossible to preserve the speech of any portion of the country from violent changes and corruptions and losses. These effects showed themselves in the Southern dialect, but much less there than in either of the two others. It clung as firmly as it well could to the original forms and inflections; and whatever it gave up, it gave up reluctantly. For evidence of this, we have a succession of literary monuments, which establish the slowness of the change that took place.

We have no such means for tracing the linguistic history of the North as we have that of the South; for, from about the end of the tenth century to the end of the thirteenth, no works were written in the language spoken in or descended from that spoken in the ancient Northumbria: or, if written, they have

not been preserved. But it is evident that the development of the Northern dialect was in the sharpest contrast to that of the Southern. It abandoned its inflections without hesitation. The works produced in it in the fourteenth century show, that, in its rejection of grammatical forms, it had even then frequently gone farther than the English we use has now, or, at any rate, had shown a disposition to go farther. One or two illustrations are all that will be needed at this point. The ending *-s* of the genitive is sometimes dropped: *man saul* appears for 'man's soul.' So is sometimes the ending *-s* of the third person singular of the present, and the *-ed* of the preterite, seen in such expressions as *he think*, 'he thinks,' and in *he cumand*, 'he commanded.' In fact, in the fourteenth century the Northern dialect had moved so far to the form now exhibited by Modern English, that a work written at that time, if printed in the existing orthography, would present but few and slight difficulties to the ordinary reader, so far as inflections and grammatical constructions are concerned.

It was in respect to slowness or swiftness of change that the great characteristic difference manifested itself between the speech of the North and of the South. In some cases as a result of this, in others entirely independent of it, the two dialects showed marked divergencies. These concern partly the spelling, partly the vocabulary, and partly the grammar. A few illustrations will be given to make this statement perfectly clear; those peculiarities being chosen by preference

which have maintained themselves in Modern English, either in the standard speech or in the Scottish dialect.

First, as regards difference of orthography. The Southern dialect used the vowel *o*, where the North preferred *a*. Thus in Early English, *land* and *lond*, *hom*(*e*) and *ham*(*e*), would indicate the two regions where these particular forms prevailed. We see this further exemplified in the Anglo-Saxon pronoun *hwā*, which in the South became *who*, and in the North *wha*. Again, the Southern dialect was inclined to use the letter *v* for *f*, a tendency which was unknown to the North; thus the Anglo-Saxon *fox*, a 'fox,' and *fixen*, a 'female fox,' became in the Southern dialect *vox* and *vixen;* and Modern English has retained the original form of the one, and the altered form of the other. Furthermore, the South was apt to turn the Anglo-Saxon *c* into *ch*, especially before the vowels *e*, *i*, and *y*, and at the end of a syllable; whereas this letter was represented in the North by *k*. Accordingly, the Anglo-Saxon *circe*, 'church,' became in the Southern dialect *chirche*, in the Northern *kirk*, still preserved in the Scottish dialect. Another illustration will be found in the case of the Anglo-Saxon verb *sēcan*, 'to seek.' This appeared respectively in the speech of the two regions as *seche*(*n*) and *seke*(*n*). In the simple verb we now use the Northern form *seek*, but in the compound *beseech* we follow the South.

Secondly, as regards difference of vocabulary. The Northern dialect adopted a number of Scandina-

vian words, brought in by the invasion and settlement of the Norsemen. Comparatively few of these found their way into the South; though some of them were adopted into the speech of the Midland dialects, especially in those counties which had fallen under the sway of the Danes. Into these latter, indeed, they may have been introduced independently, and from this source have been transmitted to Modern English. In this way we can explain the early and wide use of such Norse words as *ill*, *bound*, 'ready, destined for,' and *fro* in phrases such as 'to and fro.' The Northern local dialects naturally retain these Scandinavian words in somewhat large numbers; as, for one instance that will do for many, the word *gar*, 'to cause,' may be adduced. This comes directly from the Norse verb *göra*.

Thirdly, as regards grammatical differences. In this respect the general tendency, already mentioned, of the North to drop inflections altogether, and of the South to retain them as long as possible, formed naturally the great cardinal distinction between the two dialects. But besides this there are certain characteristic differences in the inflection itself. One of the most marked is in the plural of the present tense of the verb. In the Northern dialect this either ended in *-s*, or dropped the termination entirely. In the Southern the regular ending was *-th*. In this matter the former followed the Northumbrian dialect of Anglo-Saxon, the latter the West-Saxon. *Men say* would therefore be represented respectively by *men*

says and *men sayeth*.[1] These peculiarities lasted down in the literary language to a comparatively late period, though ordinarily not indicated in modern editions, as the text is, in this particular, silently changed whenever possible. The usage can be seen in the following illustrations: —

> O father Abraham, what these Christians are
> Whose own hard dealings *teaches* them suspect
> The thoughts of others!
>
> SHAKSPEARE, *Merchant of Venice*, act i. scene 3.

A board groaning under the heavy burden of the beasts that *cheweth* the cud. — FLETCHER, *Woman-Hater*, act i. scene 2.

Another marked grammatical difference was in the plural of the noun. In Old English, *-s* had become the regular termination of this number for all the dialects. But the Southern still continued to retain many plurals in *-en*. This form was based upon the Anglo-Saxon plural in *-an*,[2] which originally belonged to about half the nouns in the language, but exhibits in our present prose speech but one genuine survival in *oxen*. This termination, however, was sometimes added in the Southern dialect to many nouns which etymologically had no right to it. From it in consequence we have Modern English plurals like *brethren* and *children*, (A. S. *brōðru* and *cildru*), which in a strict sense were at the outset corruptions. The not uncommon dialectic form *housen* is another illustration of the fondness for this ending; in Anglo-Saxon

[1] See Part II., sec. 331. [2] Ib., secs. 27 and 57.

the plural is the same as the singular. This termination in *-en* was, in truth, sometimes given in the Southern dialect to nouns ending originally in *-as*, of which the representative was strictly *-es*. For example, we sometimes find *kingen* instead of the regular *kinges*, 'kings.' On the other hand, the Northern dialect had scarcely any plurals in *-en*. In fact, the number ordinarily found in it comprised only the four words, *eghen*, 'eyes,' *hosen*, 'hose,' *shoon*, 'shoes,' and *oxen*.

Between these two dialects stood that of the Midland counties, not merely in respect to position, but in respect to language also. It partook, to a large extent, of the peculiarities of each; while in some particulars it was independent of both. Many questions connected with its origin and development will remain unsettled, because some of its distinguishing characteristics must have come from a dialect or dialects existing in the Anglo-Saxon period, which, however widely employed in colloquial speech, left no trace of itself or of themselves in written literature. Moreover, while it had from the very beginning an independent existence and growth, it could not fail to be affected largely by the two dialects on each side of it.

Thus, as we have seen, in the fourteenth century three great dialects existed in Britain, each calling itself English, each possessing a literature of its own, and each seemingly having about the same chance to be adopted as the representative national tongue. Of

these three it was the Midland that became the language of literature, — the language we speak and write to-day. Its supremacy has involved, as one result, the degradation of the other two, with all their varieties, to the condition, in general, of local dialects, maintaining themselves as the speech of the rude and uneducated only, and destined, with the greater spread of education, to ultimate extinction. The question naturally arises, How did this result come about?

There were several circumstances that concurred to give predominance to the Midland dialect. In the first place, it was in its nature a compromise between the two found on each side of it, and could, therefore, be much more readily adopted by both than could either by the other. We have already had a direct statement to this effect by a writer of the fourteenth century.[1] In the second place, it covered a larger extent of territory than either of the others. In particular, the strength of the Northern dialect as a rival was much weakened by the fact that no small portion of the region in which it was spoken had from an early period been separated from England, and been placed under the rule of the king of the Scots. In the third place, the Midland was the speech of the district in which the two universities of Oxford and Cambridge were situated. Accordingly, all the powerful linguistic influences that flowed from these two great centres of higher education were constantly at work to extend the supremacy of the form of speech heard in them.

[1] See page 118.

In the fourth place, it was the Midland that became the tongue mainly employed at the court and the capital, as the French was gradually displaced from its position as the language of social intercourse. This last was an influence, which, powerful as it is at any period, was far more powerful then than it is almost possible for us now to conceive.

All of these reasons contributed to give the Midland special prominence as the dialect destined to become the representative one of the whole nation. Yet, strong as these various agencies were in themselves, they were insufficient to establish its supremacy over the rest, and cause them to sink into subordinate positions, of which not only others would be conscious, but which would be acknowledged as such by themselves. No really national language could exist until a literature had been created which would be admired and studied by all who could read, and taken as a model by all who could write. It was only a man of genius that could lift up one of these dialects into a pre-eminence over the rest, or could ever give to the scattered forces existing in any one of them the unity and vigor of life. This was the work that Chaucer did. He it was that first showed to all men the resources of the language, its capacity of representing with discrimination all shades of human thought, and of conveying with power all manifestations of human feeling. His choice of the Midland, or rather the fact of his writing in it, raised it at once into a position of superiority which was never afterwards disputed.

His productions, scattered everywhere, unconsciously affected the speech of all who read, and were consciously looked upon by all who set out to write as the authoritative standard of expression. The words and grammatical forms he used, the methods of syntactical construction he followed, became the ones generally adopted by his successors. With him, indeed, began the exercise of that great conservative restraint which literature throws about language, which arrests all sudden changes, and which, so long as it operates unimpaired, renders revolution or anarchy in the speech an impossibility.

It has already been stated that the Midland dialect was not altogether uniform; and that it has been divided into that of the Eastern and of the Western counties. It was in the former of these that Chaucer wrote. To speak with absolute precision, it is therefore to be said that the cultivated English language, in which nearly all English literature of value has been written, sprang directly from the East Midland division of the Midland dialect, and especially from that variety of the East Midland which was spoken at London and the region immediately to the north of it. To that it owes the forms of its words and its leading grammatical characteristics, though in these respects it has likewise been influenced in particulars by the speech both of the North and of the South.

The Scotch Dialect. — But, while these three dialects were in use in England, it was the Northern alone that was spoken in Scotland; and, as the Scotch is the

only dialect of English that can be said to have a literature of its own, a brief account of it is here in place. This Northern dialect had in that region gradually spread itself on every side from its original centre in the south, had crossed the Forth, and, steadily pressing back the Celtic tongues, had, in the fourteenth century made its way along the coast as far as the Moray Frith. Even had the speech of England and Scotland been precisely the same in the beginning, the political separation of the two countries, at a period when no literary standard existed anywhere, would of itself have been almost certain to develop, in process of time, differences between the tongues used in both. This inevitable divergence was largely increased by the fact that in the one country the Midland dialect established its supremacy and became the language of literature, while in the other, the Northern dialect was the only one ever employed at all, either in the language of literature or of common life. Accordingly, the speech of Scotland had a linguistic development in some measure independent of that found south of the Tweed.

It is to be borne in mind, however, that Scotch, as an epithet applied to speech, meant originally the Gaelic of the Celtic inhabitants of Northern Britain. Its modern sense, as applied to one dialect of our language, was then not known. What we now call the Scotch tongue is nothing but a variety of Northern English. Furthermore, it was invariably called English by the men who wrote in it during the fourteenth and

fifteenth centuries, and generally by those who wrote in it during the sixteenth. During this last period, however, the term English began to be disused, and instead it was sometimes designated as the Scotch tongue, as opposed to the English. This would undoubtedly have become the established practice had the two peoples remained under separate governments; but the union of the crowns by the accession, in 1603, of James VI. of Scotland to the English throne as James I., caused the tongue of the smaller country to lose its independent position. After that date it came to be considered and called the Scotch dialect of the English language.

Scotch literature may be said to begin with John Barbour, Archdeacon of Aberdeen, who died in 1395. He was the author of several works; but the one by which he is principally known is the historical poem called the "Brus," which, as he himself tells us, he finished in 1375. It contains between thirteen and fourteen thousand lines, and celebrates the deeds of Robert Bruce, who successfully defended the independence of Scotland against the English. Barbour was followed by Andrew Wyntoun, prior of the monastery of St. Serf's Inch in Loch Leven. Between 1420 and 1424, he wrote a metrical history entitled the "Orygynale Cronykil of Scotland." Far the best work of this earlier period is the production of James I., who reigned nominally from 1406 to 1437, and actually ruled the country from 1424 to 1437. It is a poem of nearly fourteen hundred lines, and is called "The

Kinges Quair."[1] It was written in 1423, while he was in captivity in England, in honor of the daughter of the Earl of Somerset, who afterwards became his wife.

The metrical histories of Barbour and Andrew of Wyntoun were continued in the latter half of the fifteenth century by Henry the Minstrel, or Blind Harry, as he is more commonly called. In a poem of twelve thousand lines he celebrated the exploits, real or imaginary, of the Scottish hero, William Wallace. A contemporary of his was Robert Henryson of Dunfermline, who wrote a number of poetical compositions. Among his writings may be mentioned a collection of thirteen fables, and "The Testament of Cresseid," a sequel to the "Troilus and Cressida" of Chaucer. The greatest name of all this early period is William Dunbar, who flourished from about 1460 to about 1520. His works are very various in their character, embracing a number of lyrical, allegorical, and satirical pieces. Contemporary with him was Gawin Douglas, Bishop of Dunkeld, whose most famous production was his translation of Vergil's "Æneid," with prologues of his own prefixed to each book. But perhaps the poet of the sixteenth century who was then most widely read by all classes was Sir David Lindsay. His popularity was largely due to his attacks on abuses that prevailed both in church and state, and his works are credited with having exerted considerable influence in forwarding the cause of the Reformation.

[1] *Quair*, 'a book'; Modern English *quire*.

These are the most important of the Scotch authors who flourished during this early period. The literature written in the Scotch dialect, after the union of the crowns, is often of a high order, particularly in lyric poetry. Much of it is characterized by a degree of excellence to which the literature before the union can rarely lay claim. This latter, indeed, has received great praise from some; but to most readers the works belonging to it are apt to seem uninteresting, and they are certainly very long. In spite of the merit of occasional passages, and even of occasional poems, it must be said of early Scottish literature, that, taken as a whole, it requires patience to read it, and patriotism to admire it.

The particular variety of the Northern dialect which was adopted in literature while Scotland remained an independent kingdom was that spoken in Edinburgh and its neighborhood. Here, as in most countries, the speech of the court and capital became the standard speech. From the outset it was exposed to two influences that did not affect the language of England itself. There was, first, the tongue of the Celtic inhabitants, who formed so large a proportion of the population subject to the Scottish monarch. With this it came into immediate contact, and from it naturally borrowed some words. Secondly, there was for centuries a more or less close alliance between France and Scotland, brought about by their common hostility to England. Men from one country were often engaged in the service of the king of the other.

Bodies of French troops were occasionally stationed in Scotland. Hence it was that from that tongue were introduced into the Scotch dialect a number of words never used, either in conversation or in writing, south of the Tweed.

Furthermore, the Scotch language of literature was affected to some degree by the literary language of its more powerful neighbor. The influence of Chaucer, both on style and manner of treatment, is very noticeable in the compositions of several of the early Scotch poets. It is, indeed, a signal illustration of the power over the development of a language exerted by an author of great genius, that many forms characteristic of the Midland dialect, but foreign to the Northern, were introduced from his works into the variety of the latter dialect in which early Scotch literature was composed, though they seem never to have maintained themselves there. The superiority of English literature could not, indeed, fail to make itself felt in the case of tongues so nearly allied. Still, had the two countries continued to be separate nationalities, differences in speech would have become thoroughly established; and in the island of Great Britain there would have been, perhaps, two sister languages as distinct from one another as are, for instance, Spanish and Portuguese. But, as has been pointed out, the union of the two crowns at the beginning of the seventeenth century reduced the Scottish, from the position of a tongue independent of the English, to that of a dialect of it. Having no longer any common literary stand-

ard within its borders, it speedily diverged into a number of local dialects. Each of these has peculiarities of its own, due to its surroundings, and all of them, when used in literature, have been largely affected by the influence of the standard English. No small share of the poetry composed in what is called the Scotch dialect is Scotch rather in name than in reality. It is, in fact, literary English clothed in Scottish spelling, and rendered only a little more strange by the introduction of a few provincial words. Of course, in such a statement, it is only the written language that is considered, not the spoken; for the Scotch pronunciation varies widely in some respects from that of the classical tongue. But this adoption of forms and grammatical constructions belonging to the English of literature shows, that, even in this peculiar home of the Northern dialect, the Midland has, here as elsewhere, proved too powerful for its ancient rival.

CHAPTER VII.

CHANGES IN THE MIDDLE ENGLISH PERIOD (1350–1550).

It is with the Middle English period that English literature in the limited but strictly proper sense of the word may be said to begin. The production of writings of a character so high as to be recognized everywhere as authoritative standards of expression could not fail to have an immediate effect upon the future of the language. It is the one great result of the influences now brought to bear upon it, that, from the end of the fourteenth century, our tongue has pursued an orderly development. It suffers changes, and, indeed, constant changes, both in grammar and in vocabulary; if it did not, it would no longer be a living speech. But these changes take place within certain well-defined limits; they require the consent of vast numbers, sometimes of generations; they are spread over great spaces of time. The conservative and restraining influence of literature over language necessarily grows more powerful with every successive century, because literature itself is read and studied by constantly increas-

ing numbers. The changes that have taken place during the five hundred years that have gone by since the beginning of the Middle English period bear not the slightest comparison, either in extent or importance, with those that took place during the two hundred years before that period. How comparatively insignificant the former are has already been fully exemplified in the extract which has been given from Chaucer, with the ancient spelling in one case preserved, and in the other case with it modernized.[1] An examination of these shows clearly that it is the difference of orthography, far more than the difference of vocabulary and of construction, that makes the language of the fourteenth century seem difficult.

English, therefore, from this time forth, enters upon an entirely new history. In order to comprehend clearly the character of the transitions through which it has gone during the past five hundred years, it is necessary to have well in mind one or two principles that underlie the development of language. It has already been pointed out, that, in the speech of rude and ignorant men, grammatical changes take place rapidly; whereas, under ordinary circumstances, few new words are added to the vocabulary. This fact becomes very noticeable when a cultivated tongue ceases to be used any longer by the educated, and is heard only from the mouths of the illiterate. The variations which spring up under such circumstances are easy of observation, because

[1] Pages 100, 101.

we have an ideal standard preserved by which to compare the present with the past. We have seen this fully exemplified in the breaking up of the literary Anglo-Saxon and its transition into the uncultivated Old English. Inflectional forms were largely confounded and discarded, and syntax underwent violent alteration. On the other hand, little was added to the vocabulary of the speech, much was taken away from it. Words necessary to convey the knowledge or to express the feelings of all were retained; but the special language of the educated, the language of literature so far as it is distinct from the language of common life, disappeared very largely.

The precise reverse of this condition of things is true of any language in which is embodied the colloquial and written speech of a cultivated people. In it no sudden alterations can be made in the grammar, because great literary models have given permanent form and character to that which already exists. Nor can violent alterations ever be made without a revolution mighty enough to upset the language itself in its existing form. While, therefore, in a cultivated speech, changes in inflection and syntax do take place, they invariably take place slowly and on a small scale; and, if they happen to attract observation at the time, they never succeed in establishing themselves without a struggle. On the other hand, the vocabulary is constantly increasing. The domain of knowledge is always widening; and new terms are constantly needed to express the new facts which the

many-sided activity of the race has gathered, and the new ideas it has conceived. An existing vocabulary, therefore, cannot for any long period satisfy the demand made upon it; or, in other words, a living tongue can never become what is called fixed until the men who speak it get to be intellectually dead. There is, in consequence, an absolute necessity resting upon every generation of doing one or all of three things. It must either develop new words from existing roots, or it must impose new senses upon words already in use, or it must borrow strange words from foreign tongues. In modern cultivated languages it will be found that these three agencies are in active operation side by side.

From the beginning of the Middle English period till the present time, both of these principles have been fully illustrated. On the one hand, there has been aversion to grammatical change, with consequent slowness in its adoption; on the other, there has been exhibited a marked fondness for new or foreign words, and facility in their formation or introduction. From the fourteenth to the beginning of the seventeenth century the aversion to the introduction of new grammatical forms or constructions was by no means so decided as it has been since the latter date. Literature during this early period had not begun to exert its full restraining effect upon the users of language. In truth, the standard speech was not then so indisputably established, that the inflections of different dialects did not continue to strive

with one another to be adopted in it as the correct or favorite form. In some cases even, it was not definitely settled till the seventeenth century or later, which one of two grammatical endings the literary language would prefer.

No such feelings have prevailed or could prevail in regard to the introduction of new words. That would depend almost wholly upon the real or fancied needs of the users of language. Hence it is that far the largest accessions have taken place during the Modern English period, and even late in that period. The composite character of the vocabulary had been established by the middle of the fourteenth century; by the end of it the language had received and assimilated nearly all the words it has ever taken from the Old French. During the fifteenth century there were no borrowings on a very large scale from any quarter. This smallness of addition to the vocabulary was mainly due to the failure of the intellectual movement that had begun so auspiciously at the beginning of the Middle English period. Chaucer died in 1400; but he left no successors to his genius or his authority; and, for more than one hundred years after his death, literature was in a state of collapse. Consequently the new words that were brought in did not in many cases establish themselves permanently in the speech. Nor was it, indeed, until the sixteenth century, that they began to be introduced extensively. Then, as in the previous century, they were taken, as a general rule, directly

from the Latin, and a large number of those borrowed from it at that time have not survived. As, therefore, the lexical additions of the Middle English period were either not great or not of great importance, it is the grammatical changes that went on during that time which will principally demand attention. At this point it will be necessary to lay down certain principles that affect the development of the inflectional system in a cultivated tongue.

In the history of inflections two counteracting influences, which are always operating upon language, become plainly visible. One of these is the tendency to bring about uniformity, the other the tendency to arrest all change; no matter in either case whether the result is to be desired or to be deplored. It is more especially the colloquial speech with the lighter literature that depicts it, that strives unconsciously to reduce all inflections to absolute regularity. To this tendency the great body of the literature already created is in active and constant opposition. It resists any alteration in established forms which have received the sanction of good usage. A few illustrations, taken from the inflectional system of the noun and of the verb, will make these statements perfectly clear.

In Modern English the large majority of verbs form the preterite by the addition of *-d* or *-ed*. Consequently there is a disposition on the part of children just learning the language — and, to some extent, of the uneducated — to bring all verbs without distinc-

tion under the operation of this same general law, to add *-d* or *-ed* to verbs that regularly form their preterite in a different manner. Hence we hear such expressions as *I seed, I drawed, I drinked, I knowed.* But the influence of the literary language speedily overcomes this tendency in all persons properly educated, and the correct preterite is soon used invariably and unconsciously. But at a time when no literature existed influential enough to establish a standard speech, to which all felt bound to conform, the tendency to bring about uniformity on this very point was exceedingly powerful. Hence a vast number of verbs that once formed their preterite by vowel-change replaced it by *-d* or *-ed.* For instance, *holp*, the preterite of *help*, became *helped.* The establishment of a standard literature, however, prevented a large number from abandoning their original inflection and adopting the one which the large majority of verbs followed. Furthermore, there were a certain number of verbs in which neither tendency triumphed absolutely. For instance, *thrive* can take with perfect propriety as its preterite either *throve* or *thrived.*

Let us, furthermore, take the case of the noun. The regular formation of the plural is in Modern English by the adding of the ending *-s.* Hence arises, naturally, a disposition to make all nouns conform to this rule. This we see exemplified in the tendency of young children to say *mans, foots, sheeps*, instead of the proper plurals. But in the case

of nouns taken from foreign tongues, all users of language exhibit this same disposition. Such nouns, when first brought in, almost invariably retain the inflection they have in the tongue from which they have been borrowed. But if the word come into fairly common use, they are apt to give up the foreign plural and assume in its place the regular English plural in *-s*. Thus the Greek *dogma* had, for a while after its original introduction, the Greek plural *dogmata;* similarly, the Latin *omen* had at the outset the Latin plural *omina*. But as these words began to be generally employed, the tendency to produce uniformity prevailed. *Dogmata* was discarded for *dogmas*, *omina* for *omens*.

But such a result is far from happening invariably. For various reasons foreign nouns sometimes establish themselves so firmly in the language of literature that the original plural maintains itself undisputed. Thus the desire for uniformity has never been sufficient to induce the users of language to give up *genera* and adopt *genuses* as the plural of *genus*. But in the noun also, as in the case of the verb, the operation of the two counteracting influences has sometimes resulted in giving us double forms. *Formula* and *memorandum*, for illustration, have each two plurals in correct use, *formulæ* and *formulas*, *memoranda* and *memorandums*.

It is from the conflict of these two opposing agencies that the grammatical forms of the language came out at the end of the Middle English

period what we now find them. The reduction to uniformity that was then effected has never since been disturbed; the anomalies that were then left in our speech have remained with us still. Here the most important of the changes that took place are all that can be given. As before, the usage of Chaucer will be taken as the standard of the latter half of the fourteenth century, and the comparison will accordingly be made between it and the form of the language which had become established at the beginning of the Modern English period.

Changes in the Inflection. — Nouns. — In the writings of Chaucer the noun had regularly for the plural the ending in *-s*. Still there remained then a number which had failed to conform to this general law, and terminated instead in *-n*. These were of two classes. Some were descendants of nouns belonging to the Anglo-Saxon declension, which formed its plural in *-an*, later becoming weakened into *-en*. This ending they continued to retain exclusively in certain words such as *eyen* and *oxen*, or wavered between it and the ending in *-s*, as in *been*, *bees*, and *ton*, *toos*, the modern 'toes.' By the middle of the sixteenth century the principle of uniformity had triumphed in the case of most. All of this class had passed over to the regular formation in *-s*, with the single exception of *oxen*. *Eyen* or *eyne* may also be found along with *eyes*, but then, as occasionally now, only in poetry; and the same statement is true of *shoon* for *shoes*.

Other nouns, however, had had the termination in *-n* added by what had originally been a blunder, but which blunder had in Chaucer's time become correct usage. Most of these denoted the family relation, and two of them, *doughtren* (A. S. *dohtru*) and *sistren* or *sustren* (A. S. *sweostru*), assumed before the end of the Middle English period the regular ending in *-s*, which they also had at times at its beginning. But *children* (A. S. *cildru*) and *brethren* (A. S. *brōðru*) and *kine* (A. S. *cȳ*) still preserve an *-n* to which etymologically they are not entitled. The first of these has maintained itself as the only standard form; but the two others have been for the most part supplanted by the regular formations *brothers* and *cows*. Yet it was not until almost the beginning of the seventeenth century that either of these two last-named plurals had made a permanent place for itself in the literary speech. Neither one of them is found in our version of the Bible.

Again, in Chaucer, a number of nouns are found with the plural of the same form as the singular. They are usually descendants of the Anglo-Saxon neuter noun of the vowel-declension,[1] many of which had the nominative and accusative plural the same as the nominative and accusative singular. Thus *hūs*, 'house,' had also the sense of 'houses,' and the dialectic '*housen*' has accordingly as much claim to etymological correctness as the present regular form. Most of these nouns at the beginning of the Middle

[1] See Part II., sec. 25.

English period had conformed to the regular inflection, and adopted *-s* as the ending of the plural. A few held out, as, for instance, *horse* and *thing* and *year*. These sometimes added *-s* to denote the plural, and sometimes retained in that number the singular form. By the middle of the sixteenth century, however, all of them, except in certain phrases, were inflected regularly. The same statement is true of a few words, the genitive of which in Chaucer and others had sometimes no ending at all, or ended in *-e*. Thus *brother sone* would be 'brother's son,' and *of hevene kyng* would be 'of heaven's king.' All of these genitives early adopted the regular termination in *-s*.

Pronouns. — In the pronoun the only change of importance that took place during the Middle English period was in the plural of the pronoun of the third person. In Chaucer this had *they* in the nominative, in place of the original *hī*[1]; but, in the genitive and objective were still retained the original *here* and *hem*. But even in his own time *their* and *them*, corresponding to the nominative *they*, were widely used. In the fifteenth century the latter were adopted into the speech of all, though even to this day a relic of the objective *hem* survives in the form of *'em*.[2]

Adjectives. — At the beginning of the Middle English period, the adjective, as we have seen,[3] had been nearly stripped of the numerous inflections it had possessed in the Anglo-Saxon. During the two cen-

[1] See Part II., sec. 103. [2] Ib., sec. 108. [3] See page 96.

turies that followed, it lost the little it had retained. The use of the final *-e*, to denote the plural and the definite declension in the singular, was abandoned altogether; and the adjective was left, as we now have it, without any inflection whatever. In its comparison the vowel-modification, which in some cases it underwent in Chaucer and his contemporaries, disappeared before the middle of the sixteenth century. *Long* and *strong* and *old*, at the beginning of the Middle English period, had for comparatives *lenger*, *strenger*, and *elder;* at the end of it, they had the regular forms, *longer*, *stronger*, and *older*, now in use. Here, however, the tendency towards uniformity did not meet with perfect success; for *old* has continued to keep, along with the regular form, the earlier *elder*.

Verbs. — Attention has already been called to the fact that, after the Norman Conquest, the disposition became widely prevalent to drop the final *-n*. But, though this was always in operation, it had not, even in the time of Chaucer, been carried out to a complete result. In his writings the infinitive of the verb, and the plural number of both the present and the past tenses of the indicative, end in *-en* or *-e;* thus we have *to hopen* or *to hopè*, *they hopen* or *they hopè*, and *they hopeden* or *they hopede*. In the case of the past tense it is not at all unfrequent, also, to have the final *-e* dropped in pronunciation; it sometimes happened in the case of the other two parts of the verb that have been mentioned. This tendency to drop the *-n*, which had been the prevailing one in the fourteenth

century, became almost universally established in the fifteenth. Ben Jonson in his English Grammar asserts, that, until about the reign of King Henry VIII. (1509–1547), present plurals were found in *-en*. But, though they are found at that time, they lingered then, as they did at a later period, as survivals of the past, rather than as forms in living, current use. Along with the *-n* gradually disappeared the final *-e*. It was dropped universally during the fifteenth century in pronunciation; in some cases it was dropped in the spelling, and in other cases retained.

Failure to produce Complete Uniformity. — From this survey, it is clear that a steady movement went on during the Middle English period towards the production of absolute uniformity of inflection. But, while this accomplished much, it did not succeed in accomplishing everything. In spite of it, anomalous forms continued to exist. *Sistren* and *doughteren* and *ton* had become *sisters* and *daughters* and *toes;* but *oxen* and *children* had failed to pass over into *oxes* and *childs*. The plural *hors* and *night* and *year* and *thing* had become *horses*, *nights*, *years*, and *things;* but *sheep* and *deer* had not become *sheeps* and *deers*. Nor did plurals whose form was due to vowel-modification, such as *men*, *feet*, *mice*, *geese*, lose any of their number after the fourteenth century. From the end of that century on, the influence of the opposing agency began to make itself more and more felt. The complete success of any radical movement to bring about an ideal regularity was in a large number of instances

counteracted by that conservative opposition to all change which is a marked characteristic of cultivated speech. This has been seen in the inflection of the noun; but it asserted itself most conspicuously in the conjugation of the verb. Here a movement toward uniformity, which had been in active operation since the break-up of the Anglo-Saxon, was finally arrested. Not only, indeed, was it arrested, but it may be said that a movement in the opposite direction started into being, though it has never been productive of important results.

There are in English, as in every other Teutonic tongue, two leading conjugations of the verbs. The one is called the old, or strong, conjugation; the other, the new, or weak. The main distinction between them is easy of comprehension. The weak verb adds now, or once added, a syllable to form the past tense. This syllable was in Anglo-Saxon, *-de*, which, under certain circumstances, became *-te*. Modern English has invariably dropped the final *-e* of this termination, leaving it *-d* or *-t*, and generally inserting an *e* before the *d*. For illustration, the verb *fyllan*, 'to fill,' formed a preterite *fyl-de; drȳpan*, 'to drip,' formed the preterite *drȳp-te*. In a very few cases, also, the vowel of the root was varied; thus, *tellan*, 'to tell,' formed the preterite *teal-de*, 'tol-d'; *sēcan*, 'to seek,' formed the preterite *sōh-te*, 'sough-t.' On the other hand, the strong conjugation added nothing to form the past tense, but the vowel of the root in every case underwent change; thus, *drinc-an*,

'to drink,' had in the first person of the preterite singular *dranc; glīd-an,* 'to glide,' had *glād* for the corresponding form of its preterite.

For the three centuries immediately following the Norman Conquest the distinction between these two conjugations was largely broken down; but the changes that resulted inured almost entirely to the benefit of one of them. Numbers of verbs originally having the strong inflection gave it up, and took the weak in its place. Many, indeed, of the Anglo-Saxon strong verbs had been wholly lost to the language by the beginning of the Middle English period. Furthermore, so many of those that were retained had become weak, and the general movement in that direction was so decided, that it seemed merely a question of time when the strong inflection would disappear entirely. But this movement received a check with the creation of a great native literature. In fact, the strong conjugation has lost nothing during the past three hundred years, and has lost but little during the past five hundred.

This is a statement directly contrary to the one frequently made. It is a common assertion that the strong verbs are disappearing from our tongue. The assertion, however, has no foundation in fact. On the contrary, not a single strong verb that was in regular use at the end of the Middle English period, more than three hundred years ago, has since been lost. A few strong forms, then found, are scarcely used now, and when used are almost invariably limited

to the language of poetry, as, for instance, *holp* and *clomb*. But even then these were archaic, and occur far less frequently than the weak forms *helped* and *climbed*. In fact, Ben Jonson, in his Grammar, expressly asserts of *holp* that it "is seldom used save with the poets." In some instances, also, weak preterite forms, such, for example, as *shined*, sprang up and perpetuated themselves alongside of the strong forms. But there has been a steady tendency, on the whole, to discard the use of these, and some, once in common use, are now rarely heard; for there has never been a period when this particular tendency has been more pronounced than at present.

In fact, the reverse of the common impression is the truth. A preference for the strong conjugation has manifested itself in our tongue since the establishment of literature. In accordance with this feeling, weak verbs have in a few instances assumed the strong inflection. *Dig*, for illustration, now forms the preterite *dug;* but in early Modern English *digged* is the form found. Even a certain number of anomalous verbs of the weak conjugation have successfully resisted the tendency, once prevalent, to inflect them regularly. *Reach*, to be sure, has given up its older preterite, *raught;* but this it had generally done early in the Modern English period. On the other hand, weak verbs like *teach*, *catch*, and *tell*, still prefer their preterites *taught*, *caught*, and *told*, to the forms *teached*, *catched*, and *telled*, which have at times been in use.

These were the main changes that took place dur-

ing the Middle English period, as the result of the two influences that are always at work upon cultivated speech. One addition to the inflectional system of the verb, and one loss, are also to be noted as having characterized the history of the language during these two centuries.

The addition was in the shape of a new method to express the relation of present and past time. The phrases compounded of parts of the verb *be* and the present participle, such, for instance, as *I am going*, and *I was going*, had been in common use from the earliest period of the language. In addition to these a new verb-phrase, to denote the present and past tenses, was established during this period. It was formed by compounding *do* and *did* with the infinitive, seen. for illustration, in *I do go*, and *I did go*. Forms of this kind made their appearance, indeed, in the language in the thirteenth century; but they were but little used either then or for a long time after. It was not until the beginning of the fifteenth century that they became common, and not until the end of it that they became general.

The loss was the plural form of the imperative mood. Originally this mood had distinct forms for the second person of the singular and of the plural. For illustration, in the Anglo-Saxon verb *helpan*, 'to help,' the form used in the imperative would always be *help*, whenever a single person was addressed; whenever more than one, the form would be *helpaþ*, which in later English would become and did become

helpeth. In the fourteenth century the two forms had largely come to be confounded; and by the end of the fifteenth the plural ending -(*e*)*th* had disappeared altogether.

The Middle English period saw, also, the final abandonment of the grammatical gender, and the substitution, in its place, of one corresponding to the natural distinctions of sex. This was the result of processes that had been steadily at work since the Norman Conquest. In Anglo-Saxon, the gender of the noun depended not upon its meaning, but upon its termination, or method of inflection. Objects with life were, in consequence, sometimes neuter; while far more frequently objects without life were masculine or feminine. The early language presents us in this respect the same characteristics as the other tongues of the Indo-European family, such as Latin, Greek, or the modern German. Thus, in Anglo-Saxon, *wīf*, 'woman,' 'wife,' was neuter. Again, *mūð*, 'mouth,' and *tōð*, 'tooth,' were masculine; *tunge*, 'tongue,' and *nosu*, 'nose,' were feminine; *ēage*, 'eye,' and *ēare*, 'ear,' were neuter. It is evident that such a system of denoting gender, whatever it may have been at the beginning, tended to become a purely conventional one, so far as distinctions of sex were concerned; and this it actually did become.

It was, accordingly, one great compensation for the disappearance of inflection, that with it this system necessarily disappeared. A gender which depended upon differences of termination and declension could

not continue to flourish after those differences had been swept away. When to this loss was added the still more important loss of the inflection of the adjective and the adjective pronouns, every method of denoting it was gone. The consequence was, that it was the meaning that decided the gender to which the noun should be ascribed; and this necessarily brought the gender into harmony with the real distinctions of sex. The breaking-down of the grammatical system began immediately after the Conquest. The substitution of the natural system may be said to have been mainly effected before the beginning of the Middle English period; by the end of it, the change had become perfectly established. Since that time, it is only in the language of poetry, or of passion, affectionate or inimical in its character, that objects without life are personified, or objects with life are spoken of as things; nor would even this be possible, had not a few of the pronouns still retained a separate form and inflections for distinctions of sex.

All these agencies were working actively during the Middle English period to bring the language into the condition in which we find it at the beginning of the reign of Elizabeth. Much remained unsettled and uncertain during the fifteenth century. A most important agency in establishing uniformity was the wide expansion given to the influence of the literary language by the invention of printing. This art, William Caxton (1422?–1491) introduced into England in 1476. He translated many books into his

native tongue, and the prologue to one of them — the "Eneydos," published in 1490 — gives a faithful picture of the still unsettled state of the speech, and of the difficulties that beset him who sought to write in it. As it exhibits also the character of the language towards the close of the fifteenth century, an extract from it will be given here. Caxton, after speaking of the French romance, which was his original, goes on to add the following account of the condition of the language in his time: —

And whan I had aduysed me in this sayd boke, I delyvered[1] and concluded to translate it in to Englysshe, and forthwyth toke a penne and ynke and wrote a leef or tweyne, whyche I oversawe agayn to corecte it. And whan I sawe the fayr and straunge termes therin, I doubted[2] that it sholde not please some gentylmen whiche late blamed me, sayeng þt in my translacyons I had ouer curyous termes whiche coude not be vnderstande of comyn peple, and desired me to vse olde and homely termes in my translacyons; and fayn wolde I satysfye euery man, and so to doo toke an olde booke and redde therin, and certaynly the Englysshe was so rude and brood that I coude not wele vnderstande it. And also my lorde Abbot of Westmynster ded do shewe[3] to me late certayn euydences wryton in olde Englysshe for to reduce it in to our Englysshe now vsid. And certaynly it was wreton in suche wyse that it was more lyke to Dutche than Englysshe. I coude not reduce ne brynge it to be vnderstonden. And certaynly our langage now vsed varyeth ferre from that whiche was vsed and spoken whan I was borne. For we Englysshe men ben borne vnder the domynacion of the mone, whiche is neuer stedfaste but ever wauerynge, wexynge one season and waneth and dycreaseth another season. And

[1] Deliberated. [2] Feared. [3] Caused to be shown.

that comyn Englysshe, that is spoken in one shyre, varyeth from another. In so moche that in my dayes happened that certayn marchauntes were in a ship in Tamyse, for to haue sayled ouer the see into Zelande, and for lacke of wynde thei taryed atte Forlond, and wente to land for to refreshe them. And one of theym, named Sheffelde, a mercer, cam in to an hows and axed for mete, and specyally he axyd after eggys. And the goode wyf answerde that she coude speke no Frenshe. And the marchaunt was angry, for he also coude speke no Frenshe, but wolde haue hadde egges, and she vnderstode hym not. And thenne at laste a nother sayd that he wolde haue eyren. Then the good wyf sayd that she vnderstod hym wel. Loo! what sholde a man in thyse dayes now wryte, egges or eyren? Certaynly it is harde to playse euery man by cause of dyuersite and chaunge of langage. For in these dayes euery man that is in ony reputacyon in his countre wyll vtter his comynycacyon and maters in suche maners and termes that fewe men shall vnderstonde theym. And som honest and grete clerkes haue ben wyth me and desired me to wryte the moste curyous termes that I coude fynde. And thus bytwene playn, rude and curyous I stande abasshed. But in my judgemente the comyn termes, that be dayli vsed, ben lyghter to be vnderstonde than the olde and auncyent Englysshe. And for as moche as this present booke is not for a rude vplondyssh man to laboure therein, ne rede it, but onely for a clerke and a noble gentylman that feleth and vnderstondeth in faytes of armes, in loue and in noble chyvalrye; therefor in a meane bytwene bothe I have reduced and translated this sayd booke in to our Englysshe, not ouer rude ne curyous, but in suche termes as shall be vnderstanden by goddys grace accordynge to my copye.

CHAPTER VIII.

MODERN ENGLISH.

1550, ——.

Up to this time in the nomenclature of the periods of the English tongue, and in the dates assigned to them, there has been among scholars a wide diversity of usage. In regard to the latest period, however, there is a pretty substantial agreement. There are some who assign its beginning to the year 1500; there are but very few who place it any earlier. Many refer it, as is done here, to the middle of the sixteenth century. There are those by whom it is specifically reckoned from the accession of Queen Elizabeth, which took place in 1558.

No dates can ever be given in the history of the development of any tongue, against which some objections cannot be brought. For convenience of reference, a further subdivision of Modern English is desirable. In this work it will be separated into the three following periods. The first extends from 1550 to the year of the restoration of the Stuarts in the following century, that is, to 1660; the second, from 1660 to a point in the latter part of the eighteenth century,

and in this the year 1783, the date of the ending of the American Revolution, affords a convenient terminus; the third period extends from 1783 to the present time. Though the division is made primarily for convenience of reference, it will be found, that, on the whole, it is a satisfactory division for the historical treatment of both the language and the literature.

Two facts have been pointed out in the previous chapter, to which it is now necessary to call special attention. One is, that, in highly cultivated tongues, changes in grammar always take place slowly, and, as a general rule, only after a long struggle. The other is, that, in such a tongue, changes in vocabulary, particularly in the nature of additions to it, meet with no opposition, or with comparatively little. The reasons for this condition of things reveal themselves after short consideration. In early speech men think mainly of what they are going to say, not of the way in which they are to say it; and the hearer or reader likewise cares so much more for the matter, that he does not consciously give much heed to the manner. In later times all this is reversed. The vehicle of the thought has then become a subject of consideration independent of the thought; that is, language has begun to be studied for itself, as well as for what it conveys. When any tongue has reached this point of development, the opposition to change in established forms of expression is sure to become exceedingly powerful. Against such changes are arrayed all the authority of past usage, and all the prejudice in favor of what

actually is existing, and has been found to do, though perhaps clumsily, the work demanded of it. In fact, it may be said that these changes never succeed in making themselves adopted, until the necessity for them is imperious enough to override the protests of professional purists, and the feeling of dislike to innovation which becomes almost a second nature in the cultivated users of speech.

True as these statements are of any tongue, they are especially true of Modern English. The lexical changes that have gone on in it have been numerous. Very few old words, indeed, once in common use, have been utterly lost. Nor has there been very much alteration, comparatively speaking, in the meanings of the old words, though this has been far more frequent than the actual disappearance of these words themselves. It is the accessions to the vocabulary which in this respect is the most marked characteristic of the modern speech. Additions have been made to it and are continuing to be made to it on the most extensive scale. On the other hand, the grammatical changes have been exceedingly few. During the past four hundred years not a single one has taken place in the inflection of the noun, unless the assumption by two or three of the regular plural in *-s*[1] be so considered. In the inflection of the adjective there could be none, because, at the beginning of the Modern English period, it had already been reduced to the root form. It is only in the inflection of the pro-

[1] See page 149.

noun and the verb that certain changes can be found. Of these an account of the most important will be given.

Changes in the Inflection. — The Pronoun. — The latter half of the sixteenth century witnessed the rise, or at least the general prevalence, of a confusion in the use of the nominative and objective cases of the personal pronouns and of the interrogative and relative *who*. *I* and *me*, *we* and *us*, *thou* and *thee*, *ye* and *you*, *he* and *him*, *she* and *her*, *who* and *whom*, are not unfrequently used without distinction.[1] This practice must have characterized the colloquial speech, because it is especially noticeable in the literature that represents it, the writings of the Elizabethan dramatists; though the extent of its prevalence is largely disguised in modern reprints of their works by the silent changes of the original made by editors. The confusion in the use of the nominative and the objective is more pronounced in the case of some of these pronouns than of others. In the plural of that of the second person it has established itself permanently in the speech. *Ye*, in the language of Chaucer, invariably denotes the nominative; *you*, the objective; and this usage will still be found observed in the authorized version of the Bible. But in the fifteenth century the distinction, owing to special reasons, began to break down, and before the end of the sixteenth, the two forms were used interchangeably for each other.[2] At the present time

[1] See Part II., note to sec. 117. [2] Ib. sec. 115.

the original nominative *ye*, though occasionally found, is practically supplanted by the form *you*, which etymologically belongs only to the dative and to the accusative; and in turn, *ye*, when now used at all, is more often in the objective case than in the nominative.

But numerous phrases such as *between you and I*, *it is him*, *it is her*, sprang up at that period and have lasted down in colloquial speech to our own day. To a large extent most of them have also been used in literature, and there have been times when they have been almost as common as the strictly more correct forms. Etymologically *it is me* is as proper as *it is you;* but the former expression generally incurs the censure of modern grammarians. Colloquial speech has likewise retained to a large extent the use of *who* for *whom*, in questions such as *Who did you go to see?* or *Who are you talking about?* and others of the same general character. These abound in the literature which represents the language of conversation through all the periods of Modern English. They are still constantly heard, and in some instances are so much more common than the strictly correct expressions, that the use of the latter seems at times to partake almost of the nature of pedantry.

Of all the parts of speech the pronoun is the most adverse to the introduction of any new forms; yet to its limited number the close of the sixteenth century saw the addition of *its*. The genitive of *it* (originally

hit) is etymologically *his*;[1] but this is also the genitive of *he*. It was inevitable that confusion should arise in the use of this one form applied equally to an object with life and to one without life, as soon as the system of grammatical gender had passed away. Confusion did arise; and expedients of all kinds were resorted to for the sake of securing clearness. Sometimes, as is the case in the English Bible, *of it* and *thereof* were used; as, for instance: —

> Two cubits and a half was the length *of it*. — *Exodus* xxxvii. 1.
> Two cubits and a half was the length *thereof*. — *Ib.* 6.

Sometimes *the* was employed, as in the following example: —

> For we see that it is the manner of men to scandalize and deprave that which retaineth *the* state and virtue, by taking advantage of that which is corrupt and degenerate. — BACON, *Advancement of Learning*.

More frequently still *it* was used itself as a genitive, as follows: —

> The hedge-sparrow fed the cuckoo so long,
> That it had *it* head bit off by *it* young.
> SHAKSPEARE, *King Lear*, i. 4.

Finally, both *the* and *it* were very commonly joined with *own*, making such phrases as *the own* and *it own*. The following is an example: —

> That which groweth of *it own* accord of thy harvest, thou shalt not reap. — *Leviticus* xxv. 5 (original edition).

[1] See Part II., sec. 103.

In this verse the Bishop's Bible (1572) had *the own*.

The most usual method to avoid ambiguity was, however, to change the construction of the sentence. All these difficulties led to the formation of *its*. The first record of its appearance in print that has yet been found belongs to the year 1598, where it occurs in one of the definitions of an Italian and English dictionary, entitled "A Worlde of Wordes," by John Florio. Its infrequency is made conspicuous by the fact that it appears but ten times in Shakspeare's works. With Ben Jonson (1573–1637) it is much more common, and it certainly occurs in the writings of Decker, Webster, Beaumont and Fletcher, and probably in those of all the dramatists who immediately followed Shakspeare. By the middle of the seventeenth century it had become thoroughly established. Still the fact that Milton (1612–1674) uses it but three times in his poetry, and rarely in his prose, shows that in the minds of some there was a prejudice still lingering against it. By the end of that century, however, its comparatively recent origin seems to have been entirely forgotten. Dryden, writing after the Restoration, even censures Ben Jonson for his bad grammar in using *his* where *its*, he says, would have been the appropriate word.

Verb. — In the verb the inflectional changes have been of more importance. One of them is purely special. This is the complete transition of the form *be* of the substantive verb from the indica-

tive to the subjunctive mood. In Elizabethan English *be* is found frequently alongside of *are*, at least in the third person of the plural. The practice may be illustrated by the following: —

> Where be thy brothers?
> Where be thy two sons? Wherein dost thou joy?
> Who sues and kneels and says, God save the queen?
> Where be the bending peers that flattered thee?
> Where be the thronging troops that followed thee?[1]

This practice continues to be maintained in those two great conservators of archaic expression, — the language of poetry and of low life. In the latter it still occurs constantly, in the former occasionally. But *be* early began, in literary prose, to be confined to the subjunctive mood; and this has now become the established practice in the ordinary cultivated speech.

A second change has been the gradual substitution of *-s* for *-th* as the termination of the third person singular of the present indicative. In the Midland dialect of the Eastern counties, from which literary English directly sprang, this part of the verb ended invariably in *-th*. Such was the practice of Chaucer and of those of his contemporaries, who wrote in that dialect or in the Southern. If any of them occasionally used the form in *-s*, it was ordinarily due to the desire of accommodating the rhyme. On the other hand, this third person regularly ended in *-s* in the North-

[1] SHAKSPEARE'S *Richard III.*, act iv. scene 4.

ern dialect. From this dialect it began to make its way into literary English in the former half of the sixteenth century. The practice of employing it became more and more prevalent, and by the end of that century it is found, at least in some writers, full as frequently as the ending in *-th*. The two forms are in fact used interchangeably, as in the following line from Shakspeare: —

"It blesseth him that gives and him that takes."

Accordingly, during most of the first period of Modern English the terminations *-s* and *-th* flourished side by side, neither seeming to have any preference in popular estimation; but, toward the latter part of it, the former ending became the one generally used, and with the progress of time gradually displaced the other. That the termination *-th* did not die out entirely is probably due to the influence of the English Bible. Though the authorized version of that work appeared as late as 1611, the language used in it belonged, as is well known, to the early portion of the preceding century. In it the ending is throughout in *-th*; it never, for instance, says *he makes*, but invariably *he maketh*. To this is due the preservation of the form, and the additional circumstance that it is now almost entirely confined to the language of religion.

There is nothing more supremely characteristic of our speech, especially in its later periods, than the extent to which it has developed the use of passive

formations. In this respect it has gone far beyond any other cultivated modern tongue. The discussion of this belongs mostly to syntax, and needs here nothing beyond simple reference. But the tendency in this direction which the language has long manifested, has had, as one result, the addition during the past hundred years, of entirely new verb-phrases, made up of the present and past tenses of the substantive verb, and of past participles compounded with *being*. The history of this idiom presents a striking instance of the difficulty in which the decay of old forms leaves a language, and the ingenuity it displays in striking out new paths to expression.

Anglo-Saxon had no special form for the passive. To represent, for instance, the present of that voice, it combined the past participle of any particular verb with the present tense of either the verbs *wesan* and *bēon*, 'to be,' or the verb *weorðan*, 'to become.' This last was preserved in Early English in the form *worthe(n)*, and like the corresponding German word *werden*, was not unfrequently used to form the passive; though in our tongue it conveyed usually and perhaps invariably a future signification. The following lines will exemplify it: —

> For ho so doth wel here · at the daye of dome
> Worth faire vnderfonge · by-for God that tyme.[1]

But *worthe*, in process of time, disappeared from the

[1] For who so doth well here, at the day of doom
Shall be fairly received before God that time.
Piers Plowman, Text C, Passus X., line 321.

language, and the tenses of the verb *be* became the only ones that were combined with the past participle to express the passive relation.

This it could easily do for the present tense, when the verb whose participle was used denoted a feeling which was in its nature continuous. 'The man is loved, is feared, is admired,' were expressions which presented no difficulty or ambiguity. They were genuine present tenses of the passive voice. But, when the verb whose participle was used denoted a simple act, the combination of the passive participle with the present tense of the verb *be* had the effect of giving to the full verbal phrase, not the sense of something which was then actually taking place, but of something which had already taken place. It was a completed, not an existing action, which was signified by it. 'The man is shot, is wounded, is killed,' could not well be employed of anything else than a finished result, not of an action going on to a possible result. It was not a present tense that was denoted, but a past.

The most common way taken to avoid the difficulty was to change the form of expression. Thus, in the case of the examples just given, resort could be had to inversion, and such sentences as 'they are shooting, are wounding, are killing the man,' could be employed. But these were often cumbrous and unsatisfactory. Accordingly, various circumlocutions came into use to express the idea conveyed by the passive. One of these was to join the present of the verb *be*,

to the verbal substantive in *-ing*, governed by the preposition *on* or *in*. The preposition, in time, took the form of *a*, or, rather, was corrupted into it by slovenly pronunciation, and was then usually joined directly to the substantive. In this way arose expressions like 'the house is a-building,' 'the brass is a-forging,' 'the dinner is a-preparing.' From the verbal substantive finally fell away the preposition. This left the verbal phrase designed to denote the passive relation precisely the same as the verbal phrase compounded of the substantive verb *be* and the present participle, which is one of the methods of forming the present tense of the active voice. The transition which the phrase underwent can be exhibited by using the first of the illustrations given. The following are the three forms: —

The house is in building.
The house is a-building.
The house is building.

It is obvious that this method of denoting the passive could be carried out on only a limited scale. It was but rarely the case that a subject with life could be given to a passive verbal phrase of the kind. In 'the house is building,' and 'the man is building,' it is obvious at a glance that the idea conveyed by *is building* is essentially distinct. In the one case *is building* is in the active voice; in the other it is in the passive. Nor would the difficulty have been removed, had the preposition been retained. 'The

man is a-eating' could not by any possibility be looked upon as a passive formation, and made to mean that the subject of the verb was undergoing the process of being eaten.

Some other method of expression was felt to be necessary. Accordingly, in the eighteenth century, a new verb-phrase, made up of the substantive verb and the past participle compounded with *being*, came into use. We see it exemplified in the common example 'the house is being built,' in which the new inflection is made up of *is*, and the compound past participle *being built*. Like the forms compounded with *do*, these phrases were confined to the present and preterite tenses. Their employment speedily became common. Though they met with vigorous opposition, they were found so clear in meaning, and so convenient in practice, that opposition was of no avail. They have been adopted by every living writer of repute, and may now be considered thoroughly established. Double methods of expression, like 'the house is building,' and 'the house is being built,' will in some cases doubtless continue to exist side by side for a long time to come; but no new ones of the former kind will make their way into general use, while there is no perceptible limit to the spread of those of the latter.

These constitute the important inflectional changes that have taken place in Modern English. Certain inflections, indeed, have died out entirely during this period, such as the use of *his* as the genitive of

it, and of the plurals of the present tense ending in *-en*, in *-th*, or in *-s*; but these at the very beginning of the period were already on the point of extinction. There are other grammatical changes, mostly syntactical in their nature, into which the limits of this work do not suffer us to enter. The character of them may be gathered from one or two illustrations. The name of the subjunctive mood still continues to exist in our tongue; but its employment as conveying any shade of meaning distinct from that of the indication has largely passed away. This has arisen mainly from the fact that the forms of the one mood are in great measure the same as those of the other. As a result, the distinction that once prevailed in the use of the two gradually disappeared, and when the subjunctive is now employed, the indicative can be generally substituted for it without affecting the meaning. So also in Early English the double negative strengthened the negation. Thus Chaucer, to emphasize the courtesy of the Knight, puts four negatives into the two following lines: —

> He *nevere* yet *no* vileynye [1] *ne* sayde
> In al his lyf unto *no* maner wight.[2]

In the first period of Modern English this use of the double negative to strengthen the negation was abandoned under the influence of the Latin. In fact it can almost be said that the use of the double negative itself has been given up, for it is now rarely

[1] Discourteous language. [2] No sort of person.

employed even to indicate an affirmative. Still though frowned upon by the cultivated speech, the original idiom exhibits all its early vitality in the language of low life. Questions like these, connected with the history of usage, would require a special work for their proper discussion.

Changes in the Vocabulary. — It is in the vocabulary that the greatest changes have taken place, and are still taking place, in Modern English; though they have never been of such a kind and extent as to affect radically the character and continuity of the speech. A certain number of words, such, for illustration as *ear*, 'to plough,' *leasing*, 'a lie,' have dropped out of use; but in most instances these terms had already begun at the beginning of the period to assume a somewhat archaic character. In general, it may be said that the losses in words have been comparatively slight, while the gains have been numerous. At the same time, these gains are far from having been spread equally over the history of the modern tongue. The period from 1550 to 1660 is especially remarkable for the vast number of new terms that came into the language, though the movement in that direction had begun some time before the middle of the sixteenth century. Much the largest proportion of these new words came from the Latin, but to some extent they were borrowed from the Greek, and from the modern tongues, the French, the Spanish, and the Italian.

The disposition to introduce these foreign words

had manifested itself, as we have said, in the early part of the sixteenth century; but it did not get under full headway until the latter half. It was a natural result of the causes then in operation. It was a time of great activity and intense excitement. The intellectual impulse which had been set in motion by the revival of letters was still in its first vigor. It had rent the Christian Church into two hostile camps, using against each other, in defence of their dogmas, all the resources of the common learning of the past and the new learning that was coming in. A world hitherto unknown had been laid open to view. Fresh explorations were constantly bringing to light fresh facts. The rapid increase of knowledge and of the development of thought needed new words for their expression; and new words were accordingly introduced without stint or hesitation. The readiest resource at that time of the English-speaking race was the Latin; and there was scarcely a single author of that period who did not feel himself at perfect liberty to coin from it any terms which seemed to him to express more exactly the ideas he sought to convey. The consequence was that vast multitudes of words came then into our tongue, numbers of which have not as yet been collected into our dictionaries, and perhaps, in some cases, have never had any existence outside of the written speech. Certainly many of them never came into general use, and it is not unlikely that no small proportion of them were confined to the individual authors who invented them. In conformity

with the terminology previously used, this influx is often called the "Latin of the Fourth Period."

But, at the time of the restoration of the Stuarts, the intellectual impulse above mentioned had practically spent its force. The period from 1660 to 1783 was a critical rather than a creative age; and it added but a small amount to the English vocabulary. This state of things, however, was again broken up towards the close of the eighteenth century. A great political and humanitarian revolution was in progress throughout Europe. It was attended, not merely with a social upheaval, but with a general intellectual movement, which presents many striking resemblances to that of the sixteenth century. One direct result was the introduction of a vast number of new words, which the rapid advance in every department of human investigation has rendered necessary. Some of these, to be sure, are nothing but revivals of terms which had previously been brought in during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but had fallen into disuse; but much the larger proportion of them are entirely new coinages. Especially is this true in the manifold departments of modern science, in which every advance gives birth to a number of hitherto unknown words. These, in most instances, are taken from the Greek. To a large extent, they are purely technical in their character; but, with the progress of the arts, a certain number are sure to pass into general circulation.

There is still another characteristic which has

marked the later development of the English vocabulary. During the past hundred years, our tongue has shown a decided tendency to go back to its older forms, and to revive a large number of words that have been kept alive only in the provincial dialects. This is a tendency which the constantly increasing attention paid to the study of English in its earlier stages has naturally accelerated. The result is that many terms which were once known to but few are now familiar to all. The language of the sixteenth and even of the fourteenth century is much nearer to us than it was to the men of the eighteenth century. Its words and phrases require far fewer explanations. This is a condition of things which will be apt to characterize more and more the future. Under any circumstances, the continued and indeed ever-increasing popularity of the great writers of Modern English is sufficient to prevent the terms they use from becoming obsolete, or the language itself to wander far away from the forms which they have made familiar.

The fact of English possessing, to a large extent, a double vocabulary — one composed of Teutonic, the other of Romance words — has given a marked character to the literature of various epochs. At any time, to be sure, a difference of terms employed will always be due to a difference of subject. It has already been pointed out, that the language of reasoning and philosophy, of intellectual processes of any kind, will necessarily make extensive use of the Latin element; while, on the contrary, the language of feel-

ing, in whatever shape manifested, will be mainly taken from the Teutonic element. But, even in treating of subjects of a similar character, different writers living at the same time will vary widely in their choice of words. Moreover, it may be said that the literary speech has shown a constant tendency to oscillate between the two vocabularies. During the first period, from 1550 to 1660, the Latin influence was plainly predominant. It affected, not alone the words, but also the construction. The involved and stately sentences of Bacon, Hooker, and Milton, belong to a species of writing which is no longer cultivated; indeed, it is only in the dramatists of the Elizabethan age, that anything closely resembling modern prose can then be found.

During the second period — that between 1660 and 1783 — the two elements of the vocabulary were, in the main, harmoniously blended, though during the latter part of it, under the influence of Johnson, a temporary reaction occasionally manifested itself in favor of the Latin. But even this speedily passed away. On the other hand, during the last period of Modern English, and especially at the present time, a reaction in favor of the Teutonic element has set in. In spite of the immense accessions to the vocabulary from the classical tongues, due to the progress of science, it is probably true that the proportion of words of native origin used by popular writers, as contrasted with words of foreign origin, is greater now than at any time during the past three hundred years.

But the history of the language shows that there is nothing permanent about any of these movements, whether in favor of the Teutonic or of the Romance element of our tongue. Both are essential to the speech in its present form, and a marked preference for the one, to the exclusion of the other, can, at best, be never anything more than a temporary fashion.

Settlement of the Orthography. — During the Modern English period the orthography has become fixed. The form of the word remains the same, though it may be pronounced in half a dozen different ways. Originally this was not the case. In the earlier periods of the language, the orthography may fairly be described as phonetic, as far, at least, as it could be made such with the imperfect means furnished by the Latin alphabet for the representation of English sounds. It continued to retain this character even after it had been affected by the orthography of the Old French. Accordingly, each one tried to spell as he pronounced; and, as pronunciation varied in different parts of the country, the spelling necessarily varied with it.

Many causes have contributed to bringing about the present unphonetic character of the English tongue. A most important factor in giving it fixedness of form was the influence exerted by the art of printing, in the practice of which uniformity of spelling is a matter of much consequence. Still this uniformity was a result very gradually reached. In the progress towards the modern orthography the seventeenth

century shows a clear advance over the sixteenth. Even in the early part of it the majority of words are spelled as they are now. In many variations exist from that at present universally found, as well as between that employed at the time itself in different printing-houses or by different writers. As illustrations of the former, the final *-e* frequently appeared in many words from which it is now discarded, as, for example, *doe*, *finde*, *beene*, *unknowne*, *heate*, *kinde*, *soone*, *againe*. The *e* of the genitive and plural was often retained, as in *yeares*, *dreames*, *mindes*, *houres*. The present final *-y* is frequently represented by *ie*, as *easie* and *busie*. Numerous other examples could be cited of variations from the orthography now employed; but these are sufficient to indicate, in a general way, their nature.

The latter part of the seventeenth century shows the progress towards the modern form very plainly. At the beginning of the eighteenth century the present orthography was pretty nearly established; though, in regard to numerous words, there was still wide diversity of usage. It was not until after the publication of Dr. Johnson's dictionary, in 1755, that the existing spelling can be said to have become universally received. That given by him to words has been the one generally followed by all later writers. The variations that have taken place in the orthography since his time have been neither numerous nor important. One of the most significant, for instance, though in itself really insignificant, is the general dropping of the final *-k*

from such words as *domestick*, *musick*, *publick*, as they were authorized in his dictionary. Worse than all, a deference has sprung up for our present spelling which is not justified by anything in its character. Orthography was a matter about which Johnson was totally incompetent to decide. Yet, largely in consequence of the respect and even reverence still paid to that which he saw fit to employ, the spelling of English continues to be probably the most vicious to be found in any cultivated tongue that ever existed. With a number of sounds for the same sign, and again with a number of signs for the same sound, it is in no sense a guide to pronunciation, which is its only proper office. Even for derivation — an office for which it was never designed — it is almost equally worthless, save in the case of words of direct Latin origin.

Wide Extension of English. — During the modern period of its history, English has been carried over a large share of the habitable globe, and the number of those who speak it is constantly increasing. Under conditions that existed in former times, this fact could be followed but by one result. Different tongues would have sprung up in different countries, varying from each other, and varying more or less from their common mother; and the differences would have constantly tended to become more marked with the progress of time. But there are two agencies now in existence that will be more than sufficient to prevent any such result. These are, first, the common possession of a great literature accessible to men of every

rank and every country; and, secondly, the constant interchange of population that results from the facility of modern communication. Joined to these is the steadily increasing attention paid to the diffusion of education, the direct effect of which is to destroy dialectic differences, and make the literary speech the one standard to which all conform. These agencies become year by year more wide-reaching and controlling. The forces that tend to bring about unity are now so much more powerful than those that tend to bring about diversity, and the former are so constantly gaining in strength, that deviation on any large scale between the language as spoken in Great Britain and in its Colonies, and in America, can now be looked upon as hardly possible.

This brings us directly to the discussion of a question with which the general history of English may properly conclude: What is to be the future of our tongue? Is it steadily tending to become corrupt, as constantly asserted by so many who are laboriously devoting their lives to preserve it in its purity? The fact need not be denied, if by it is meant, that, within certain limits, the speech is always moving away from established usage. The history of language is the history of corruptions. The purest of speakers uses every day, with perfect propriety, words and forms, which, looked at from the point of view of the past, are improper, if not scandalous. But the blunders of one age become good usage in the following, and, in process of time, grow to be so consecrated by custom and

consent, that a return to practices theoretically correct would seem like a return to barbarism. While this furnishes no excuse for lax and slovenly methods of expression, it is a guaranty that the indulgence in them by some, or the adoption of them by all, will not necessarily be attended by any serious injury to the tongue. Vulgarity and tawdriness and affectation, and numerous other characteristics which are manifested by the users of language, are bad enough; but it is a gross error to suppose that they have of themselves any permanently serious effect upon the purity of national speech. They are results of imperfect training; and, while the great masters continue to be admired and read and studied, they are results that will last but for a time.

The causes which bring about the decline of a language are, in truth, of an entirely different type. It is not the use of particular words or idioms, it is not the adoption of peculiar rhetorical devices, that contribute either to the permanent well-being or corruption of any tongue. These are the mere accidents of speech, the fashion of a time which passes away with the causes that gave it currency. Far back of these lie the real sources of decay. Language is no better and no worse than the men who speak it. The terms of which it is composed have no independent vitality in themselves: it is the meaning which the men who use them put into them, that gives them all their power. It is never language in itself that becomes weak or corrupt: it is only when those who use it

become weak or corrupt, that it shares in their degradation. Nothing but respect need be felt or expressed for that solicitude which strives to maintain the purity of speech; yet when unaccompanied by a far-reaching knowledge of its history, but, above all, by a thorough comprehension of the principles which underlie the growth of language, efforts of this kind are as certain to be full of error as they are lacking in result. There has never been a time in the history of Modern English in which there have not been men who fancied that they foresaw its decay. From the sixteenth to the nineteenth century on, our literature, whenever it touches upon the character of the vehicle by which it is conveyed, is full of the severest criticism; and its pages are crowded with unavailing protests against the introduction of that which now it hardly seems possible for us to do without, and, along with these, with mournful complaints of the degeneracy of the present, and with melancholy forebodings for the future. So it always has been; so it is always likely to be. Yet the real truth is, that the language can be safely trusted to take care of itself, if the men who speak it take care of themselves; for with their degree of development, of cultivation, and of character, it will always be found in absolute harmony.

In fact, it is not from the agencies that are commonly supposed to be corrupting that our speech at the present time suffers; it is in much more danger from ignorant efforts made to preserve what is called its purity. Rules have been and still are laid down

for the use of it, which never had any existence outside of the minds of grammarians and verbal critics. By these rules, so far as they are observed, freedom of expression is cramped, idiomatic peculiarity destroyed, and false tests for correctness set up, which give the ignorant opportunity to point out supposed error in others; while the real error lies in their own imperfect acquaintance with the best usage. One illustration will be sufficient of multitudes that might be cited. There is a rule of Latin syntax that two or more substantives joined by a copulative require the verb to be in the plural. This has been foisted into the grammar of English, of which it is no more true than it is of modern German. There is nothing in the usage of the past, from the very earliest times, to authorize it; nothing in the usage of the present to justify it, except so far as the rule itself has tended to make general the practice it imposes. The grammar of English, as exhibited in the utterances of its best writers and speakers, has, from the very earliest period, allowed the widest discretion as to the use either of the singular or the plural in such cases. The importation and imposition of rules foreign to its idiom, like the one just mentioned, does more to hinder the free development of the tongue, and to dwarf its freedom of expression, than the widest prevalence of slovenliness of speech, or of affectation of style; for these latter are always temporary in their character, and are sure to be left behind by the advance in popular cultivation, or forgotten through the change in popular taste.

It cannot indeed be laid down too emphatically that it is not the business of grammarians or scholars to decide what is good usage. Their function is limited to ascertaining and recording it. This can only be done by the prolonged and careful study of the language, as it has been employed by its best authors. It is they who settle by their practice what is correct or incorrect, and not the arbitrary preferences or prejudices of writers on usage or grammar. These constantly assume an authority to which they are not entitled. Ignorant of their own ignorance, they condemn because they fail to understand. The grammar of different periods does, it is true, vary to some extent. What is right at one time may become wrong at another. Still, as a general rule, he who studies faithfully the great masters of English literature need rarely feel any hesitation about adopting the words or phrases or expressions which have received the sanction of their usage.

Of the languages of Christendom, English is the one now spoken by far the largest number of persons; and from present appearances there would seem to be but little limit to its possible extension. Yet that it or any other tongue will ever become a universal language is so much more than doubtful, that it may be called impossible; and, even were it possible, it is a question if it would be desirable. However that may be, its spread will depend in the future, as it has depended in the past, not so much upon the charac-

ter of the language itself, as upon the character of the men who speak it. It is not necessarily because it is in reality superior to other tongues, that it has become more widely extended than they, but because it has been and still is the speech of two great nations which have been among the foremost in civilization and power, the most greedy in the grasping of territory, the most successful in the planting of colonies. But as political reasons have lifted the tongue into its present prominence, so in the future to political reasons will be owing its progress or decay. Thus, behind everything that tends to the extension of language, lie the material strength, the intellectual development and the moral character, which make the users of a language worthy enough and powerful enough to impose it upon others. No speech can do more than express the ideas of those who employ it at the time. It cannot live upon its past meanings, or upon the past conceptions of great men that have been recorded in it, any more than the race which uses it can live upon its past glory or its past achievements. Proud, therefore, as we may now well be of our tongue, we may rest assured, that, if it ever attain to universal sovereignty, it will do so only because the ideas of the men who speak it are fit to become the ruling ideas of the world, and the men themselves are strong enough to carry them over the world; and that, in the last analysis, depends, like everything else, upon the development of the individual; depends, not upon the territory we buy or steal, not upon the gold we

mine, or the grain we grow, but upon the men we produce. If we fail there, no national greatness, however splendid to outward view, can be anything but temporary and illusory; and, when once national greatness disappears, no past achievement in literature, however glorious, will perpetuate our language as a living speech, though they may help for a while to retard its decay.

PART II.

HISTORY OF INFLECTIONS.

CHAPTER I.

SOME FEATURES COMMON TO ALL THE TEUTONIC TONGUES.

1. HE who contrasts the English of the Anglo-Saxon period with the English of to-day is at once struck by the difference between the ancient and the modern tongue in respect to vocabulary and inflection. It is with the latter alone that we have to do in the following pages. Its history is largely a record of abandonment of forms once deemed necessary, and of confusion in the use of those that were retained. Nevertheless, it would be a great error to suppose that loss or change of inflection is especially characteristic of the later life of our language as distinguished from the earlier. Even when our speech made its first appearance in a few written monuments of the seventh and eighth centuries, it had then already given up much that once belonged to it. The stripping of inflection from the English tongue had begun long before any productions which have been handed down had been composed in it. Many of the irregular forms which are still found at this day owe their existence, and their apparently anomalous character, to changes

that had taken place before a word of our language had been committed to writing; in periods, indeed, as to which it is absolutely unknown where even the men were living who spoke our speech.

2. But, without the aid of written monuments, how can we know this to be a fact? How can we be sure that forms once existed in our tongue which have never been preserved in its literature? The answer to these questions not only renders necessary an account of the characteristics of the inflection prevailing in the earliest period of English, but, to some extent, also an examination of certain features which are common to it with the other Teutonic tongues. Its precise relations to them, the grammatical peculiarities that distinguish them all, must be clearly comprehended, before the student can understand the reason of the general tendencies which have manifested themselves in the history of our inflection, or the origin of the particular anomalies which are still retained in it.

3. It has already been stated that English is a member of a family of languages, called the Teutonic or Germanic, which itself forms one branch of a still larger family, termed the Indo-European, or the Aryan.[1] All the tongues belonging to the latter have come from the same source. They are, therefore, more or less remotely allied to one another. But no record of this one primitive Indo-European speech exists, no monuments of it have been preserved, from which its words and forms can be gathered. We are,

[1] See introductory chapter.

therefore, under the necessity of making out what these words and forms must have been, by a comparison, in accordance with certain scientific principles, of the languages that have been derived from this unknown original tongue. Words and forms which are common to all its descendants, it is very safe to say, must have existed in the parent-speech. In most cases they are naturally more changed and disguised in appearance, the more remote they are from it in time. Looked at from this point of view, it may be said that, as a general rule, the older the tongue, the closer is the resemblance it is likely to bear to the original from which it came. Accordingly, Sanskrit, with a literature going back to at least fifteen hundred, and probably two thousand, years before Christ, is conceded to be much nearer, on the whole, in its forms and inflections, to the primitive Indo-European than any of its numerous sister-languages.

4. A similar statement is true of that branch of the Indo-European family to which English belongs. There are in existence no monuments of the primitive Teutonic speech from which all the members of the branch have descended. The words and forms constituting it can only be made out, in the same manner as in the case of the primitive Indo-European, by a scientific comparison of those found in the derived tongues. Necessarily, the older languages of this branch, of which monuments have been handed down, are of the first importance. Of these the Gothic, whose scanty literature goes back to the fourth cen-

tury after Christ, must be regarded as presenting, on the whole, much the nearest likeness to that theoretical primitive Teutonic speech which is the common parent of all. But the other older languages belonging to this sub-family are also of importance. These are the Old Norse, the Old High German, and the Low-Germanic tongues, the Low Frankish, the Old Saxon, the Old Frisian, and that English of the earliest period which has had given to it in ordinary usage the name of Anglo-Saxon.

5. All these tongues had many things in common. In particular, loss of inflection not only characterized the primitive Teutonic as compared with the primitive Indo-European, but also characterized the members of the Teutonic branch as compared with their immediate parent. Some of the earliest tongues retained more than others; the Gothic, as the oldest, naturally retained the most of any. Each one of them, however, clung to particular forms and inflections which the others had given up partly or wholly. Before considering the special later history of English, it is therefore desirable to point out some general resemblances which existed between it in its earliest state, and the sister-languages of the same Teutonic branch. When once the common basis from which they started is understood, the later relations of each to the others immediately become much clearer. Especially does the later history of our tongue have light thrown upon it by the development which has characterized the rest. We shall, in this place, limit

ourselves to the general features that mark the inflection of the noun, the adjective, and the pronoun, in order to make plain the loss sustained by the primitive Teutonic as compared with the primitive Indo-European, and further the loss of the English as compared with the parent Teutonic. The characteristics of the verb, so far as they are examined at all, will be discussed by themselves.

6. Case. — The primitive Indo-European had eight cases. These were the nominative, the subject of the sentence; the accusative, the case of the direct object; the dative, the case of the indirect object; the genitive, the case of general relation, or the *of* case; the instrumental, the case denoting accompaniment and means, the *with* or *by* case; the ablative, the case denoting separation, the *from* case; the locative, the case denoting the place where any thing is or is done, the *at* or *in* case; and the vocative, or the case of address. All of these were originally distinguished by difference of ending. But the tendency showed itself, from the earliest period of which we have any record, to give up one or more of these case-forms. When this result occurred, one of two things happened. Either the place of the case that was abandoned was taken by another case with a preposition, or one case was made to do the duty of another in addition to its own. Thus, in Latin, the ablative was required to perform the instrumental relation, and, in Greek, the genitive the ablative relation.

7. Of these eight cases the primitive Teutonic still

retained six, though only four of them could be said to exist in full vigor. The two that were lost from this branch were the ablative and the locative. Two others, the vocative and the instrumental, maintained a lingering life. A special form for the vocative is found in the noun of the Gothic. The instrumental is occasionally but clearly seen in the singular of the noun and adjective in the Old High German and the Old Saxon, and in the demonstrative pronouns of all the early Teutonic tongues, save the Old Norse. It is likewise regarded by many as belonging to the Anglo-Saxon noun and adjective. But the remaining four cases are found in all the older languages of this branch, including, of course, Anglo-Saxon, and still survive in one of them, the New High German.

8. **Number.** — The primitive Indo-European had three numbers, — the singular, the dual, and the plural. In the Teutonic noun and adjective the dual had disappeared entirely. The Gothic retained it to some extent in the verb. In the personal pronouns of the first and second person, however, it is found in all the earlier languages of this branch, save that, in some of them, forms for certain cases are very rare, if not lacking entirely.

9. **Declension.** — There are two declensions of the Teutonic noun. They are termed respectively the vowel or strong, and the consonant or weak declension; but in the older languages they underwent still further division. The vowel-declension was split up into three, according as one of the short vowels, *o* — to which *ā*

was the corresponding feminine — or *i* or *u*, was the final of the formative syllable, or itself the formative syllable, added to the radical syllable to make the stem. The endings of the noun had been frequently so cut down, even in the earliest Teutonic tongues, that in the majority of cases there can be found in the nominative only a remnant of the additions originally made to the radical syllable. In Anglo-Saxon the abbreviation was carried still further, so that often nothing but the radical syllable itself was left. Thus the word for 'fish' is in Gothic *fisks*, in Old Norse *fiskr*, while in our early speech it is simply *fisc*. It is to be added that original *o* generally became *a* in the Teutonic tongues, and hence the *o*-declension was for a long period commonly called the *a*-declension.

10. In each one of these subordinate declensions in *o*, in *i*, and in *u*, the nouns had different inflections, according as they were of the masculine, the feminine, or the neuter gender. Consequently, in the primitive Teutonic, there were probably nine different inflections belonging to the vowel-declension. Still this system can nowhere be found, if it ever really existed, in its theoretical perfection. There is, for example, not a single neuter noun belonging to the *i*-declension in any one of the earliest Teutonic tongues; and there are numerous other indications that this system was losing everywhere its complex character. In particular in the Anglo-Saxon the declension in *o* had practically absorbed the declension in *u*, the special terminations of the latter having been abandoned, and those

of the former having been substituted. There was, besides, but very little left of the *i*-declension, its words having largely gone over to the *o*-declension.

11. Again, of the primitive Indo-European consonant declensions, only the one in which the stem ended in *-an* was retained in the Teutonic. Accordingly the weak or consonant declension is sometimes called the *n*-declension. This became a favorite declension in the Teutonic tongues, and existed in full vigor in all the early ones. In them it had inflections somewhat distinct, according as the noun was masculine, feminine, or neuter, though these differences were far from being as marked as in the vowel declensions.

12. But though the *n*-declension was the one consonant declension that really flourished in the early Teutonic languages, there still continued to survive in them relics of other consonant declensions once of wide employment in the primitive tongue. Nor have they died out entirely in our present speech. To them belong nouns like *man* and *tooth*, which still exhibit vowel-modification in the plural; others like *month*, and *night*, and *cow*, which, though they have come to be declined regularly, show traces of their ancient inflection in terms like 'twelvemonth,' 'fortnight,' and the dialectic 'kye'; and certain, having stems in *-r* or in *-nd*, such as nouns denoting the family relation like *father* and *brother*, or present participles used as nouns, such as were originally *friend* and *fiend*. These and others which could be mentioned are, however, so few in number comparatively that they are properly treated as anomalous.

13. There is also a third declension, unlike either of the two just mentioned, which is found in pronouns and adjectives. Its peculiar characteristics will be seen further on. Besides these general features, common to the inflection of the Teutonic noun, adjective, and pronoun, there were certain peculiarities connected with the changes in vowels or consonants that need to be described here, for they have been perpetuated through all periods of English. They are not confined, however, to any particular parts of speech.

14. One of these is the tendency in inflection of certain letters to pass into others. There were several instances of this nature in the early Teutonic tongues. For example, in the inflection of the Anglo-Saxon verb ð not unfrequently passed into *d*, a result of which, though disguised, can still be observed in the preterite *cou(l)d* and the adjective *un-couth*.[1] But a more striking exemplification of this practice is the passing of *s* into *r*, which goes sometimes under the name of rhotacism. This particular transition was by no means uncommon in many of the Indo-European languages, and is familiarly exemplified in the Latin comparative of the adjective ; as, for instance, *fort-ior*, *fort-ius*. Among the Teutonic tongues it was most widely employed in the Old Norse ; but in Anglo-Saxon it was occasionally found. A trace of it can still be seen in the adjectives *lorn* and *forlorn*, originally the past participles of *-lēosan*, 'to lose,' and *for-*

[1] See Part II., sec. 414.

lēosan, 'to lose entirely' (182). But there is one marked example of it in Modern English in the imperfect of the substantive verb, which has for its singular *was*, but for its plural *were* instead of *wese*.

15. Far more conspicuous and important has been and is the part played by **vowel-variation.** This, as used in this work, will be employed to denote any change of vowel-sound, no matter from what cause arising, that takes place within the radical syllable. It will, therefore, denote alike the changes seen in inflection in such words as *man*, *men*, in *sell*, *sold*, in *drive*, *drove*, and in the formation of new words from the same root, sometimes closely related in meaning, sometimes widely differing, as may be exemplified by *band* and *bond*, and numerous others. Two kinds of vowel-variation will be defined more specifically.

16. The first is **vowel-change** (German, *ablaut*). This is especially seen in the change of the vowel of the radical syllable, by which the inflection of verbs of the strong conjugation was and still is denoted. Familiar examples are *begin*, *began*; *thrive*, *throve*; *tear*, *tore*. Under this head will also be included that class of strong verbs which formed the preterite by reduplication — that is, by the repetition of the stem syllable with more or less of abbreviation and modification. Examples of this practice can be observed in the Latin *mordeo*, *mo-mordi*; *tundo*, *tu-tundi*; *cano*, *ce-cini*. This method of forming the preterite has been plainly preserved in the Gothic alone of the Teutonic tongues. In the other languages of this

branch of the Indo-European family but faint traces of it can now be discovered.

17. The Gothic has some forty verbs in which this reduplication appears. Even in that tongue, it had so far departed from the theoretical primitive type, that only the initial letter of the root was repeated with a constant vowel-sound denoted by *ai* (thus, present, *blanda*, 'blend,' preterite, *baibland*, 'blended'; present, *halda*, 'hold,' preterite, *haihald*, 'held'; present, *sēpa*, 'sleep,' preterite, *saizlēp*, 'slept'). But, in the other Teutonic dialects, the abbreviation had been carried still further. Not only was the final letter or letters of the reduplicational syllable dropped, but the initial letter of the radical syllable and, in some cases, the vowel also of the radical syllable. The reduplicational and radical syllables were thus united into one; and, in Anglo-Saxon verbs of this kind, the result of this contraction was a monosyllabic preterite with the vowel *e*, *ē*, or the diphthong *eo*, *ēo* running through both the singular and the plural. Taking the three verbs above given, *blandan*, *healdan*, and *slēpan*, we have, accordingly, in Anglo-Saxon, the presents, *blēnde*, *healde*, and *slāpe*, the preterites, *blēnd*, *hēold*, and *slēp*. In a few cases only is this primitive reduplication clearly discernible in our early tongue. Thus Gothic *haitan*, 'to call,' has as preterite *haihait;* the corresponding Anglo-Saxon *hātan* has for its preterite *heht.*

18. The second kind of vowel-variation is in this work termed **vowel-modification** (German, *umlaut*).

It is in Modern English exemplified in the inflection of a number of nouns, such as *man, men; foot, feet; mouse, mice.* It is not only widely different in its character from vowel-change, it is likewise widely different in its origin. It was not known to the Gothic; it is comparatively infrequent in Old High German; but in the other Teutonic tongues it is prevalent, especially in the Norse. In Anglo-Saxon it was principally caused by the influence of the vowel *i* of a following syllable.

19. Vowel-modification is the variation of sound produced in a radical syllable by the influence of a vowel in the syllable added, usually an added inflectional syllable. It is a noticeable fact, that, under certain circumstances, the vowel of an added syllable has often a tendency to modify the vowel of a stressed syllable to which the addition is made. Before pronouncing the vowel of the first syllable, the thought of the vowel of the following one comes into the mind. Unconsciously there is an effort to bring about a similarity of sound; and the result is, that a sound is given to the vowel of the first syllable intermediate between the sound it had previously and the sound of the vowel in the syllable added. This is seen, for illustration, in the word *ǣnig*, 'any,' derived from *ān*, 'one,' and the suffix *-ig*, Modern English *-y*. The influence of the vowel of the added syllable has been sufficient to change the vowel of the primitive from *ā* to *ǣ*.

20. This modification of the vowel of the preced-

ing syllable was produced by several vowels; but, as has just been said, it was the influence of a following *i* that was most conspicuous in Anglo-Saxon. In this matter it made no difference whether the original *i* itself still continued to be found, or had disappeared entirely, or had been changed into another vowel. The result remained. Only a few of the variations wrought by this vowel will be indicated here. The influence of the *i* of a following syllable changed *a* of a preceding accented syllable to *e*; changed *o* usually and *u* regularly to *y*; changed $\bar{o}$ to $\bar{e}$ and $\bar{u}$ to $\bar{y}$; and changed the diphthongs *ea* and *eo* to *ie*, later *i* or *y*. Thus the *o* of *gold* became *gylden*, 'gilden, golden,' in the derived adjective, and the $\bar{o}$ of *dōm*, 'doom,' became *dēman*, 'to deem,' in the derived verb. Again, the Anglo-Saxon *fōt*, 'foot,' has in the nominative and accusative plural *fēt*, 'feet,' and also the same form in the dative singular. The change of $\bar{o}$ to $\bar{e}$ in these cases of the noun is due to the influence of an *i*, which once belonged to them as an additional syllable, but which had come to be dropped. But though the cause disappeared, the effect continued. Men retained in their speech the modification wrought by the vowel after the fact had been long forgotten that the vowel itself had ever been added; and this is equally true of the other instances adduced.

21. This concludes all that is necessary to be said here of the features common to English with the other Teutonic tongues. Before entering, however, upon the later specific history of the inflection of our lan-

guage, it is important to have clearly in mind the terminology here employed, and, though already given in full, it will bear repetition.[1] The history of the language is in this work divided into four periods: the first, called the Anglo-Saxon, extending from the coming of the Teutonic tribes to the year 1150; the second, the Old English, extending from 1150 to 1350; the third, the Middle English, from 1350 to 1550; and the fourth, the Modern English, from 1550 to the present time. Furthermore, whenever it is desired to cover the whole period between 1150 and 1550, the term Early English is employed. It is also to be remembered, that, during the Old and Middle English periods, the language both of literature and of daily life was divided into three great dialects, called, from their geographical position, the Northern, the Midland, and the Southern; and that literary English is a descendant of the Midland, and that the Scotch dialect belongs to the Northern.[2]

22. There is still another point which needs special consideration before entering upon the internal history of our tongue. This is the important fact, that, from the beginning of the twelfth century to the middle of the fourteenth century, — and the limits might be extended, — there was no such thing as standard English. Everything, in consequence, was fluctuating and uncertain. No authority existed anywhere, as to the use of words and grammatical forms, to which all felt themselves obliged to submit. Every writer

[1] See page 87. [2] See page 121 ff.

was, to a large extent, a law unto himself, and followed the special dialect of his own district in the lack of a generally recognized standard which could not be safely violated. But a tongue split up into dialects, and possessing nowhere binding rules for syntactical agreement and arrangement, nor authoritative methods of inflection, can hardly be said to have a history of any general orderly development of its own. The account which is given of it can never be much more than a classification of the differences of speech prevailing in different sections of the country, or a record of the peculiarities of grammar and vocabulary that characterize individual writers.

23. This is a condition of things which conspicuously characterized our speech during the Old English period. In it, at that time, can be found the processes going on in full activity that destroyed the language of literature as seen in the tenth and eleventh centuries, and, likewise, the regenerating processes going on that were to develop the language of literature of the fourteenth and the following centuries. It is only between these clearly defined points that comparison can properly be made; and, even at the beginning of the latter period, the language of literature is rather in process of formation than actually formed. Still, after the break up of the classical Anglo-Saxon, the fourteenth century is the first period in which anything can be called fixed, and in which, in consequence, any comparison can be made between the past and what is existing. In the conflicting usage of this time also,

the Midland dialect is necessarily selected, to the exclusion of the other two, because from it Modern English strictly descended; and of the authors who wrote in the Midland, with more or less diversity of usage among themselves, the language of Chaucer is likewise necessarily selected as representative, not only because he was much the greatest of all, but more especially because his works had a greater influence on the future development of the speech than the works of all the others put together. The two points, therefore, selected in representing the forms prevalent in the early history of the language will be ordinarily the tenth and eleventh centuries, — the period of the later classic West-Saxon dialect of Anglo-Saxon, — and the latter half of the fourteenth century, which witnessed the birth of Modern English literature in the strict sense of that phrase.

CHAPTER II.

THE NOUN.

24. THE following general statements may be made of the English noun during the Anglo-Saxon period. It had, —

1. Two declensions: the vowel or strong, and the consonant or weak. The former was limited mainly to stems which ended originally in *o* (9), although there were remains of those in *i* and *u*, especially of the one in *i*. The latter was mainly limited to the stems ending in *-n* (11), fragments remaining only of those in *-r*, in *-nd*, in *-os* and *-es*, and some other letters (12).

2. Two numbers: the singular and the plural.

3. Four cases: the nominative, the genitive, the dative, and the accusative. Many grammarians, following Grimm,[1] add a fifth, the instrumental. This was at one time distinguished from the dative in the singular by marking for the former the final *-e*, common to both, as long *-ē*; but the practice is no longer continued. There is no difference at all in the plural.

[1] "Geschichte der Deutschen Sprache," 936.

4. Three genders: the masculine, the feminine, and the neuter. As will be seen by the examples, it is grammatical, not natural gender.

25. The following paradigms of the masculine nouns, *stān*, 'stone,' and *ende*, 'end'; of the feminines *caru*, 'care,' and *wund*, 'wound'; and of the neuters *hors*, 'horse,' and *scip*, 'ship,' will exhibit the various inflections of the noun of the vowel-declension as commonly seen in the Anglo-Saxon. The vowel of the stem has in certain of the cases been often dropped altogether, or has been weakened, or changed into other vowels.

I. Vowel Declension.

SINGULAR.

	Masculine.		Feminine.	
Nom.	stān,	ende,	caru,	wund,
Gen.	stānes,	endes,	care,	wunde,
Dat.	stāne,	ende,	care,	wunde,
Acc.	stān.	ende.	care.	wunde.

PLURAL.

	Masculine.			
Nom.	stānas,	endas,	cara,	wunda,
Gen.	stāna,	enda,	cara, carena,	wunda,
Dat.	stānum,	endum,	carum,	wundum,
Acc.	stānas.	endas.	cara.	wunda.

SINGULAR.

Neuter.	
hors,	scip,
horses,	scipes,
horse,	scipe,
hors.	scip.

PLURAL.

Neuter.	
hors,	scipu,
horsa,	scipa,
horsum,	scipum,
hors.	scipu.

26. Nouns originally belonging to the other two vowel declensions, that is, those whose stems ended in *i* or *u*, had, even in the Anglo-Saxon, gone over wholly or partially to the *o*-declension. There were no small number of feminines, however, which belonged still to the *i*-declension; but their forms had become largely confused with those of the prevailing declension in *o*. As none of them had any influence upon the later development of the inflection, their consideration is omitted here altogether.

27. The consonant, or, more specifically, the consonant declension in *-n*, will be exemplified by paradigms of the masculine noun *oxa*, 'ox,' of the feminine, *tunge*, 'tongue,' and of the neuter, *ēage*, 'eye.' The stems are *oxan*, *tungan*, and *ēagan*.

But not only have the original case-endings usually disappeared; in some instances, the *-n* also has been dropped, or the *a* weakened into *e*.

II. Consonant Declension.

SINGULAR.

	Masculine.	Feminine.	Neuter.
Nom.	oxa,	tunge,	ēage,
Gen.	oxan,	tungan,	ēagan,
Dat.	oxan,	tungan,	ēagan,
Acc.	oxan.	tungan.	ēage.

PLURAL.

	Masculine.	Feminine.	Neuter.
Nom.	oxan,	tungan,	ēagan,
Gen.	oxena,	tungena,	ēagena,
Dat.	oxum,	tungum,	ēagum,
Acc.	oxan.	tungan.	ēagan.

28. According to some one of the paradigms found in sects. 25 and 27, the immense majority of all nouns were declined during the Anglo-Saxon period. There are a few exceptions, which will be referred to later. As between the vowel and the consonant declension, there was not much difference in the number of substantives belonging to each in the Anglo-Saxon; and the foreign words that came in were inflected according to either. When ending in a consonant,

they were usually inflected according to the vowel declension, and, when in a vowel, according to the consonant. This state of things did not perpetuate itself. It is evident, on even a superficial examination, that, of the six different inflections given above, Modern English has retained only that found in the masculine noun of the vowel declension, — the one represented by *stān* and *ende*.

29. Still, for a century after the Norman Conquest, these different inflections were kept up with a fair degree of correctness. The changes that took place, such as they were, involved, however, as an inevitable consequence, the confusion of the declensions. One of these changes was the general weakening into *e* of the vowels *a*, *o*, and *u* of the endings. This manifested itself, indeed, long before the Conquest; but the influence of the literary speech was sufficient to keep it under restraint. As soon as that was removed, this general weakening of the vowels made rapid headway. In consequence of it, *stānas* and *endas*, for illustration, became *stanes* and *endes; caru* became *care; scipu* became *scipe;* and *oxan* and *tungan* became *oxen* and *tungen*. So far, then, as difference of inflection was denoted by difference of vowel in the endings, all distinction between number, case, and declension had disappeared before the end of the twelfth century by the general use of *e* for the vowels previously employed.

30. This was not enough of itself, however, to overthrow the inflectional system of the noun. At this point another change came in to break down the

broad distinction previously prevailing between the vowel and the consonant declension. After the middle of the twelfth century, there was a constant tendency toward the assimilation of these two. from the arbitrary gains and losses that went on in the use of a single letter. This was *n*, which was of special importance from its terminating a large number of cases in the consonant declension. From these, however, it came in the twelfth century to be frequently dropped. This dropping of the final *-n* had, indeed, manifested itself, as early as the ninth century, in the West-Saxon dialect, though then more especially in the infinitive and subjunctive of the verb, and in the definite adjective; but here, again, as in the case of the weakening of the vowels *a*, *o*, and *u* to *e*, the literary language had arrested the movement. Within a century after the Conquest, however, the process had again begun. Thus the genitive, dative, and accusative singular of *oxan*, *tungan*, and *ēagan* of the consonant declension, after passing through the intermediate stages. *oxen*. *tungen*, and *eȝen*, became frequently, with the *-n* dropped, *oxe*, *tunge*, and *eȝe*. This brought them at the very outset into complete similarity with many nouns of the vowel declension, which, as we shall subsequently see, had also come to end in *-e*.

31. The reduction of the various terminations of many nouns of the two declensions to the one ending *-e* had frequently, in consequence, the effect of rendering it difficult to decide, in any given case, to which of these two declensions any particular noun strictly

belonged. The result of this confusion can be clearly traced in the language for more than two hundred years after the Conquest. It was not uncommon, in the uncertainty that sprang up, for an *-n* to be added to the dative and accusative singular of nouns belonging to the vowel declension. Thus Anglo-Saxon *cyng*, 'king,' is a masculine noun inflected in the same manner as *stān*. Accordingly, its dative and accusative singular should strictly have been in late twelfth-century English, *kinge* and *king* respectively. As a matter of fact, they both sometimes appeared as *kingen*. This uncertainty added another element of confusion to that which already prevailed. So thoroughly confounded, indeed, did these two declensions become, especially in the plural number, that it is by no means infrequent to find the same word, in the pages of the same author, sometimes with the plural *-es* of the masculine nouns of the vowel declension, or with the plural *-en* of the consonant. In the South of England in particular, it almost seems as if the two terminations could be used indiscriminately in the case of certain words. This peculiarity lasted down to the Middle English period.

32. Nor, indeed, was this all. A third plural form, though far less commonly employed, came into use. Its ending was *-e*. It was derived from the weakened *-a* or *-u* of the feminine and neuter nouns of the vowel declension, or from the dropping of *-n* of the consonant declension. The same author, therefore, formed, at times, his plural with three different ter-

minations; or, rather, it is more proper to say that these three terminations appeared in different copies of the same work. Thus the two texts of the "Brut" of Layamon furnish, as plurals for the Anglo-Saxon masculine noun *stān*, the forms *stanes*, *stanen*, and *stanè;* for plurals of the neuter noun *hors*, the forms *horses*, *horsen*, and *horsè*.

33. Such a system as this, which was little more than the product of ignorance and confusion, had in itself no element of perpetuity. The process of simplifying inflection merely as a measure of relief went on rapidly, in consequence, though much more so in the North than in the South. This simplification was eventually attained by discarding the terminations almost entirely. When, in the latter half of the fourteenth century, a new language of literature appeared, the inflection of the noun had been reduced to nearly its present state. Whatever of it had been preserved conformed in general to that of the Anglo-Saxon masculine noun of the vowel declension, represented in the paradigm of *stān*. This is the inflection which became finally established in English speech. Its history, therefore, requires a more detailed examination of the endings of the cases belonging to it and of the gradual adoption of these endings by nouns originally inflected differently.

34. First, as regards the simplification of the singular. The fact, that, in this number, masculines and neuters of the vowel declension had precisely the same inflection, — as can be seen by comparing *stān*

and *hors*,— had, doubtless, much to do with the universal adoption of the endings belonging to them; for these two declensions united embraced a very large proportion of the nouns of the language. In these the nominative, dative, and accusative had largely come, in the time of Chaucer, to have the same form. In the case of words ending in a consonant, the process generally took place after this manner. The dative and accusative singular speedily began to lose, and by the fourteenth century had practically lost, all distinction of form. This was brought about in one of two ways. Either the dative sometimes dropped a final *-e* to which it was entitled; or, secondly, and far more commonly, the accusative assumed a final *-e* to which it was not entitled. Thus the dative and accusative came to have the same form, sometimes ending, sometimes not ending, in a final *-e*. The same word, indeed, was not only treated in this respect differently by different authors, but differently at different places in the same manuscript. Thus, for illustration, the dative and accusative of the Anglo-Saxon *stān* and *hors* would, in Early English, be represented in both cases, sometimes by *ston* and *hors*, and sometimes by *stone* and *horse*.

35. But the assimilation did not stop at this point. In Anglo-Saxon the form for the nominative and accusative was alike in masculine and neuter nouns of the vowel declension. It was natural that it should continue to be regarded and treated as the same by the users of speech. When, therefore, the accusative

assumed an *-e* which did not belong to it, the inevitable result was, that this *-e* should be added likewise to the nominative. Hence in a large number of instances nouns originally ending in a consonant early assumed and have since retained a final *-e*, to which etymologically they are not entitled.

36. This was a condition of things that would have been pretty certain to happen if no other influences than those already mentioned had been brought to bear; but, as a matter of fact, a very powerful one from another quarter aided to hasten the accomplishment of this result. This was the fact that the nouns belonging to all the other declensions, which had begun to conform to the inflection of the masculine noun, had, by the weakening of the final vowel and the dropping of the final *-n*, brought about independently the assimilation of the nominative, dative, and accusative. An examination of the changes through which *caru* and *oxa* went will make this perfectly clear. *Caru* had in Anglo-Saxon its dative and accusative *care:* the weakening of the final *-u* to *-e* made its nominative of precisely the same form, *care*. So *oxa*, which in Early English became *oxe*, had originally for dative and accusative *oxan*, which first became *oxen*, and then *oxe*. The result was, that, by the beginning of the Middle English period, the nominative, dative, and accusative of all nouns, had practically become the same in form. Occasional instances do occur of a regular dative ending distinct from that of the nominative and accusative; but they are merely

scattered survivals of a distinction that was generally disregarded.

37. There was one case of the singular, however, which did not share in the general movement towards simplification. This was the genitive. In the masculine and neuter nouns of the vowel declension, its ending was *-es*; and to that it remained constant. Furthermore, this termination of these masculine and neuter nouns began, from the commencement of the Old English period, to encroach upon those of the genitives of the other declensions. Its only serious competitor was the ending in *-e*. This represented two distinct inflections. There was the genitive in *-e* of the feminine nouns of the vowel declension, represented by *caru* and *wund*. There was another genitive in *-e* derived from the *-an* of the consonant declension, in which *-an* had first become *-en* and had then dropped the *-n*. The Anglo-Saxon *hlǣfdige*, which was early cut down to *laʒdye*, 'lady,' is a representative of this latter class. In this the form for the genitive was the same as the nominative, and nothing but the context can determine with certainty the case.[1] For a long time genitives in *-e* from these two sources continued to be used; and they are found as late as the literature of the latter half of the fourteenth century. But even then they were far from

[1] *Lady* from *ladye* in the following line is an example of this genitive:

Which that he seide was oure *lady* veyl.

CHAUCER, *Prologue to Canterbury Tales*, l. 695.

common; and, in the following century, *-e* as a genitive ending died out entirely, and *-es* was everywhere employed for all nouns, no matter what their origin.

38. One further exception there was to the unanimity exhibited in the early adoption of the ending *-es*. The *r*-stems which survived in Anglo-Saxon belong to nouns indicating the family relation, such as *fæder, brōðor, mōdor*. In these the form of the genitive was regularly the same as that of the nominative. This peculiarity of inflection lasted down into the Middle English period. Hence we find in Chaucer such expressions as "by my fader soule," "thy brother sone," in which *fader* and *brother* are strict genitive forms. All these nouns — *father, mother, brother, sister*, and *daughter* — soon after adopted the standard genitive ending *-es*, which had, indeed, occasionally made its appearance in some of them at an early period.

39. In the plural the process of simplification was even more thorough. Except in the case of a very few nouns, all the endings were reduced to one. This was derived from the termination *-as*, found in the nominative and accusative of masculine nouns of the vowel declension, as *stān-as, end-as*. This *-as* became *-es* after the Conquest, which made its form exactly the same as that of the genitive singular, and this characteristic it has retained through all the subsequent history of the noun.

40. One plural termination there was which was common in Anglo-Saxon to all nouns of whatever declension. This was the *-um* of the dative, which

has left a trace of itself in the adverb *whilom*, originally the dative plural *hwīlum*, from *hwīl*, 'while.' It might naturally be expected that this particular ending, from the very universality of its use, would be the last to be dropped. On the contrary, it was one of the first to give way. Its early abandonment is susceptible of an easy explanation. Even in the Anglo-Saxon monuments of the ninth century this ending *-um* frequently appeared as *-on*; and the same statement is true of the centuries that followed. Within the first hundred years after the Conquest, this *-on*, from *-um*, not only was much more common than its original, but its vowel underwent the weakening that overtook all the vowels of the endings, and the termination became *-en*. This, in the case of nouns of the consonant declension, gave it the same form as the nominative and accusative plural, the *-an* of whose terminations had been weakened into *-en* also. In the confusion that soon sprang up in the use of the two leading declensions by the dropping or appending of the final *-n*, all distinctive character was taken away from the ending *-um*, after having passed into *-en*, as specially belonging to the dative plural. It speedily adopted, in consequence, the form that was found in the nominative and accusative, whether it was the *-es* of the vowel declension or the *-en* of the consonant.

41. The genitive plural held out longer as a distinct termination. At least one form of it, *-ene* or *-en*, lasted down to the end of the fourteenth century. This *-en(e)* is derived from *-ena*, the regular termination of the geni-

tive plural of all Anglo-Saxon nouns of the consonant declension, though in late Anglo-Saxon it had made its way into a few feminine nouns of the vowel. Still, when used in the Early English period, it was not limited to either of these inflections. For instance, in the phrase *Christe kingene kynge*,[1] 'Christ, King of kings,' the word *king* receives this termination, though originally it was a masculine noun of the vowel declension. But from the very outset, after the breaking up of the inflections of the original tongue, the form of the genitive plural showed a tendency to assimilate itself to that of the nominative and accusative. By the beginning of the Middle English period, this had become the almost universally accepted rule.

42. The endings of those two cases, the nominative and accusative plural, were at first usually either *-es*, from the *-as* of the masculine vowel declension, or *-en*, from the *-an* of the consonant declension. Had these been kept sharply distinguished, and confined to the nouns to which they properly belonged, they would, doubtless, have both lasted to our time; but, in the absence of any standard of authority, they were confused with one another, and even applied at different times to the same noun, apparently at the mere fancy of the writer. This is at least true of the Southern dialect. Language, however, is too economical in the use of its material to permit long the employment of such double forms on any extensive scale. One of them had to disappear. In our tongue it was the

[1] Langland's "Piers Plowman," Text B, passus xvii., 105 (about 1377).

plural in *-en*. In this simplification the Northern dialect, as usual, led the way; and one of the great points of contrast between it and the speech of the South was the scarcity of plurals in *-en* in the one, as compared with their frequency in the other. Indeed, to this form the Southern dialect clung with so much tenacity, that there is little question that a large number of nouns with this ending would have been now in constant use, if that dialect had been the parent of Modern English, instead of the Midland. Not only did the speech of the South sometimes give to the same noun two plurals, — one in *-es*, and the other in *-en*; but as has been pointed out, it frequently gave the termination *-en* to Anglo-Saxon nouns of the vowel declension as well as to those of the consonant.

43. The Midland dialect, as usual, followed a path between the two extremes. In this respect, however, it was influenced much more by the example of the North. By the latter half of the fourteenth century it had generally discarded the ending *-en*, and the ending *-es* had become established as the regular form.[1] In Chaucer, the representative author of the literary speech, we find the plural regularly terminating in *-es*, or, in certain cases, simply in *-s*. The only relics of the original plurals in *-an* to be found in his writings are the following nine, — *asshen*, 'ashes'; *assen*, 'asses'; *been*, 'bees'; *eyen*, 'eyes'; *fleen*,

[1] There were orthographic variations of this, due to difference of pronunciation, such as *-is*, *-ys*, *-us*; but they do not need to be considered here.

'fleas'; *flon*, 'arrows'; *hosen*, 'hose'; *oxen*; and *ton*, 'toes.' Even of these the modern plurals in *-s* are also to be found employed by him in the case of *ashes*, *bees*, and *toes*. To this list may be added *shoon*, 'shoes,' which in Anglo-Saxon, however, belonged strictly to the masculine vowel declension, though it had occasionally plural forms of the consonant. This use of *-s* as the regular termination of the plural, then firmly established, was never after subjected to change. It ought to be added that the third plural in *-e*, already described (32), had died out entirely; at least, in the confused use of final *-e*, which had become current, it was no longer recognizable as distinct from the neuter forms which are now to be described.

44. There is one fact which becomes apparent upon a close examination of the neuter monosyllabic nouns of the vowel declension (25). It is, that such of the nouns as had the radical vowel long did not assume the ending *-u* in the nominative and accusative plural. Nothing was added to the singular. Accordingly the forms for these two cases would be precisely alike in both numbers. This was true whether the vowel was long by nature, as in *hūs*, 'house'; *gēar*, 'year'; *dēor*, 'animal'; or long by position before two consonants, as in *hors*, 'horse'; *þing*, 'thing'; and *folc*, 'folk.' Naturally, therefore, these nouns, even after the break-up of Anglo-Saxon, would be apt to have their plurals of the same form as the singular. But during the Old English period most of these neuters came gradually to conform to the declension of the

masculine nouns. They, in consequence, assumed *-es* in the plural. Occasionally some of them seem to have adopted *-e*, the weakened form of the *-u* final of the plural of neuter nouns of the same declension, whose vowel was short. This was not often the case, however, and is from its very nature attended with uncertainty. The nominative singular itself was frequently disposed to assume a final *-e*. It becomes, therefore, impossible to say whether *-e*, when it occurs in the plural, is to be considered, in any particular instance, as a plural termination, or a mere inorganic addition to the word. But there is no question that by Chaucer's time the vast majority had accepted the plural in *-es*. Still some, such as *thing*, and *hors*, and *folk*, and *year*, were in a state of transition, and exhibited double forms, — one ending in *-es*, the other precisely resembling the singular. In the case of certain of these words this same state of things continues to our day. A very few held on to the ancient inflection and never underwent any further change.

45. If a comparison, accordingly, be made between the literary language at the beginning of the Middle English period and that prevalent during the Anglo-Saxon period, it will be observed that, in the centuries which intervened, the four cases of the noun, so far as they had been distinguished by differences of form in the singular, had now been reduced to two. Again, in the Anglo-Saxon plural, the nominative and accusative had never had any distinction of form ; but there had been special forms for the genitive and dative. These

various terminations had now all been reduced to one, and that was, with a very few exceptions, the one which ended in *-es*. Accordingly, the paradigm of the Anglo-Saxon *stān*, which had now come to stand as the general representative of the noun inflection, was the following: —

	Singular.	Plural.
Nom., Dat., and Acc.	ston *or* stone,	*All Cases.* stonès.
Genitive.	stonès.	

It is evident at a glance that this is practically the Modern English declension. The few slight changes that have since occurred are nothing but a natural development of the tendency that had already brought the inflection of the noun to this point. The later history of the inflection will clearly show that the main differences between our declension to-day and that of the fourteenth century are all due to a more hurried pronunciation. Other differences are apparent and not real, inasmuch as they are differences in the representation of the sounds, and not in the sounds themselves. These will be considered in their regular order. The first concerns the termination *-e*.

46. At the beginning of the Middle English period, nouns which had originally ended in a vowel almost invariably ended in *-e*; and this *-e*, we have seen, was frequently assumed by nouns which originally ended in a consonant, and were, therefore, not strictly entitled to it. But, between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries, the final *-e*, whether etymologically belonging

to the word or not, disappeared from pronunciation. In the lawless and capricious spelling of the language that sprang up after the invention of printing, the retention of this letter in the orthography came to be a mere matter of accident. The words given in the Anglo-Saxon paradigms are sufficient to serve as examples. Of the modern representatives of these, *stone* and *horse* now terminate in an *-e*, to which they are not etymologically entitled: while *end* has given up the *-e* to which it is entitled. On the other hand, *care*, *tongue*, and *eye* conform to their original in having a final vowel, and *ship* and *wound* conform to theirs in not having one. Furthermore, *oxa* sometimes appears in modern orthography as *oxe*, but more usually as *ox*.

47. In the early part of the Middle English period the *-es* of the genitive singular and of the plural still appeared as a distinct syllable. Thus, for illustration, *stones* was at that time pronounced as a dissyllable, and not as now as a monosyllable. But even then this practice was showing signs of passing away. In the fifteenth century its abandonment went on rapidly. By the beginning of the Modern English period, the final *-es* had ceased to be pronounced as a separate syllable, save in those cases where the nature of the word still requires it to be sounded, as in *foxes*, *horses*. The dropping of the unpronounced *e* was a result that ultimately followed in those nouns which did not retain an *-e* in the nominative singular. Thus *arm* gave up *armes* and became *arms*, *day* gave up *dayes*

and became *days*, and *lord* gave up *lordes* and became *lords*. This discarding of the *e* of *-es* had previously taken place on a large scale in the case of polysyllabic words, those in particular that ended in a liquid. In Chaucer, for illustration, we have *servaunts*, *pilgrims*, *naciouns*, where the *-s* is added directly to the stem. While the fuller form *-es* sometimes occurs in words of this class, it is far from being so common.

48. Another peculiarity is now found in the declension of the noun, though the consideration of it belongs rather to punctuation than to inflection. In the seventeenth century the practice of distinguishing the genitive singular from the plural came into vogue by placing an apostrophe before the final *-s* of the former; but it was not till the eighteenth century that this became fully established. It was in time followed by adopting the still further distinction of placing an apostrophe after the *-s* of the genitive plural; so that, for example, the genitive singular *boy's*, and the genitive plural *boys'*, though spelled and pronounced alike, are in reading easily recognized as different.

49. The genitive case has likewise come to be so limited in usage as to express ordinarily the relation of possession, and, in consequence, most grammarians give it the title of "possessive." This is, however, an unfortunate name; for, while this is the relation it expresses principally, it is by no means the one it expresses exclusively. Furthermore, as the dative and accusative have lost all distinction of form in both nouns and pronouns, the name of "objective" is gen-

erally given by modern grammarians to the case expressing the relations of direct and indirect object, formerly expressed by the two. The indirect relation is, to be sure, usually indicated by a preposition with the noun; but it is not so invariably. In such a sentence as 'He gave the boy a book,' *boy* denotes the original dative of the indirect, and *book* the original accusative of the direct object.

50. The plural form of nearly all nouns had come, in the fourteenth century, to be precisely the same as that of the genitive singular; and the later history of the one differs in no respect whatever from the later history of the other. When the *e* was dropped in the genitive ending *-es*, it was also dropped in the endings of the plural: when it was retained in the former, it was retained in the latter. The account just given of the one, therefore, involves that of the other.

51. This completes the history of what may be called the regular inflection of the noun. It now remains to consider the comparatively few words, which, in spite of the pressure always at work to produce uniformity, have steadily resisted the tendency to go over to the declension which in the fourteenth century had become the standard one. These belong to four classes; and in all of them it is the method alone of forming the plural that distinguishes their inflection from the rest.

52. The first of these embraces the neuter monosyllabic nouns already spoken of (44) as exhibiting no difference of form between the nominative and

accusative singular and plural. While nearly all of these had gone over to the ordinary inflection in *-s*, a few held out, and to this day have remained faithful to the original inflection. The more marked examples among these are *deer* and *sheep*, which now never add anything to form the plural. This was not always so, however. In Early English, *deer*, for example, can be found in different writers either with no termination in the plural, or with the ending *-es*, or with the ending *-en*. The two other words, *swine* and *neat*, ordinarily classed with the two preceding, are now rarely used save in a collective sense. But during the Old and Middle English periods there was great diversity of usage in the case of certain of these words, such as *thing*, and *folk*, and *horse*, and *year*, and to some extent this continues to prevail in our own day. Still the tendency was always toward the exclusive adoption of the regular inflection by these words.

53. But beside the use of the singular form of certain words in a collective sense, there are to be found in our language no small number of nouns which under special circumstances, or in special significations, undergo no change in forming the plural. They usually denote measure, size, weight, periods of time, or species. In most instances it is no easy matter to determine how this practice originated. In the case of *pound* and *yoke* it could be considered as representing the original inflection of the neuter noun of the vowel declension. But several of these words — such as *foot*,

fathom, mile, sail, score, stone, and *tun* — come from Anglo-Saxon nouns of other declensions. Furthermore, this practice was early extended to words from Romance sources. In Chaucer, for illustration, *vers* and *cas* mean 'verses' and 'cases,' as well as 'verse' and 'case.' We have, likewise, in Modern English a similar usage of Romance words, such as *bushel, brace, couple, dozen, gross,* and *pair.* With certain of these words, such as *gross,* in the sense of 'twelve dozen,' or *sail,* in the sense of 'vessel,' as 'fifty sail,' the regular form in *-s* is unusual and perhaps unknown. Names of a few animals and of several species of fish have no change of form in the plural occasionally, and in some instances invariably. In general, however, it may be said that the modern language shows an increasing preference for the plural in *-s.* But there continue to be many words, such as *pair* and *pairs, score* and *scores, couple* and *couples,* in which the frequency of the form either with or without *-s* varies with individual usage, or with the peculiar sense intended to be conveyed.

54. The second class includes a few nouns, which, in the English of the Anglo-Saxon period, invariably underwent vowel-modification (19) in the nominative and accusative plural, and have in some cases transmitted these modified forms to the English of our day. This was originally due, as has been explained, to the influence of a following vowel; and, while the vowel once following has been dropped, the vowel-modification wrought by it remains. In the instances about

to be cited, it was an *i* that has disappeared, which brought about the variation of *ō* to *ē*, of *ū* to *ȳ*, and of *a* to *e*. There were about a score of these nouns in Anglo-Saxon, of which the following eight survive in Modern English. In the list as here given the nominative singular and plural are placed side by side: —

Singular.		Plural.	Singular.		Plural.
brōc,	*breeches,*	brēc.	cū,	*cow,*	cȳ.
fōt,	*foot,*	fēt.	lūs,	*louse,*	lȳs.
gōs,	*goose,*	gēs.	mūs,	*mouse,*	mȳs.
tōð,	*tooth,*	tēð.	man,	*man,*	men.

That this modification of the vowel was not in itself a sign of the plural is at once made clear by the fact that, in Anglo-Saxon, the dative singular had invariably in these words, and the genitive singular had occasionally, precisely the same form as the nominative plural.

55. Of the nouns just mentioned the form representing *brōc*, with the vowel *ō*, does not seem to have been in use after the Conquest. Its place was taken, as early as the twelfth century, by *brech*, *breech*, from *brēc*, and this in turn has been supplanted by the form with the plural ending *-es*. The original plural of *cū* was retained in the speech of the North, and is still found in the *kye* of the Scotch dialect. But another plural form, *kine*, had shown itself as early, certainly, as the beginning of the fourteenth century, and later became established in the language of literature. Its origin will be indicated in the remarks upon the third

class (57). The remaining six, *foot*, *goose*, *tooth*, *louse*, *mouse*, and *man*, have remained unchanged, in respect to vowel-modification, during all the periods in the history of the language. Still, sporadic instances occur, in which the regular ending *-s* appears, with the vowel unmodified in the case of several of these words, giving, for example, such forms as *foots*, *mouses*, and *mans*.

56. In the third class are embraced the few nouns which still exhibit the ending in *-n*, once common to half the substantives of the language. It has already been stated that, in the confusion that sprang up in the use of the vowel and consonant declensions, it was one of the inflections of the former that had triumphed over all the others. Of the nine words belonging to the original consonant declension that are used by Chaucer (43), three are likewise to be found with plurals in *-s*, clearly showing that the transition to the generally accepted form was going on. It continued to go on with unabated vigor after his death. By the beginning of the Modern English period, the only genuine historical plural in *-n* that was used in prose and poetry was *oxen*. Even during the fourteenth century the form *oxes* is occasionally found.[1] *Eyen*, moreover, continued to be employed, but it was looked upon then, as now, merely as a poetic form. Of the vast number of nouns originally belonging to the consonant declension, *ox* is, therefore, the solitary survival

[1] *E.g.* "Droves of *oxis* and flockis of sheep." — *Judith*, ii. 8 (Purvey's Recension).

in Modern English, and even that, in the singular number, conforms to the vowel declension. It is to be added that *hosen*, which Chaucer used, dropped its *-n*, but did not add an *-s*.

57. At the same time, during this long conflict, the consonant declension did not fail to add some words to its numbers. In fact, in the Southern dialect, many nouns, as we have seen, belonging to the vowel declension, formed their plural in *-n*. The literary language of the Midland, however, in the latter half of the fourteenth century, had almost entirely discarded this termination; though, as might be expected, there is a slight difference of usage in the writings of different authors. Taking Chaucer as the representative of this period, the following statement can be made in regard to these forms. There are six words, as employed by him, which still continue to show in the plural a final *-n* derived from the plural of the consonant inflection. Not one of these six, however, belonged to the two leading Anglo-Saxon declensions. All of them exhibited irregularities in the earliest speech. Here will be given, side by side, the Anglo-Saxon form, the Old English intermediate form, and the Middle English form of the plural; though there are numerous orthographic variations of all of them, which will not be noticed here: —

Anglo-Saxon.	Old English.	Middle English.
brōðru,	brothre, brethre,	bretheren.
dōhtru,	dohtere,	doughtren.

Anglo-Saxon.	Old English.	Middle English.
sweostru,	sustre,	sustren.
cildru,	childre,	children.
fāh, *hostile*,	fon,	fon.
cȳ, *or* cȳe,	kye,	kyn.

58. Of these words *daughter*, *sister*, and *foe* exhibit in Chaucer's usage, if the manuscripts can be trusted, plurals both in *-n* and in *-s*. By the beginning of the Modern English period all, however, had assumed the latter termination. Each of the three other words has had a history of its own. The present strictly regular form *brothers* has been found in Layamon's "Brut" belonging to the Old English period, but it can scarcely be said to have come into use till the sixteenth century. Up to that time *brethren* was the form regularly employed. In the century just mentioned *brothers* was revived, or again developed, and in the seventeenth century came to be preferred. The language still retains the two plurals, but ordinarily makes a slight distinction in their usage.

59. *Child* has even a more peculiar history. Its Anglo-Saxon original, *cild*, had several ways of forming the plural, but *cildru* finally came to be the prevailing one. This assimilated the inflection of the word to that of a small class of Anglo-Saxon nouns, of which *lamb*, *calf*, and *egg* are the modern representatives. These originally added *r-u* to form the plural, and in later English developed not only the regular plural in *-es*, but the plurals *lambren*, *calveren*, and *eyren*. In all

of these now disused forms the *-n* of the consonant declension has been added to the weakened original inflection. *Child* went through essentially the same process, developing in the North of England the plural *childre, childer*, and in the South adding to this form the ending *-n*. This early became, and has since remained, the standard form. The plurals which *cū*, 'cow,' developed have been already given (55). It need only be added that it was apparently not until the seventeenth century that the strictly regular form 'cows' came into use. It is not found in Shakspeare, or in our version of the Bible. *Kine* even now continues to be employed, but as a general rule it belongs rather to the language of poetry than of prose.

60. There now remains the fourth class to be considered, — that of the foreign nouns that have been imperfectly Anglicized, and still retain, in consequence, the plural they had in the tongue from which they were taken. Naturally the endings are very diverse. Most of these words have been introduced during the Modern English period; many are terms connected with the natural or physical sciences. A large number of them are, therefore, technical in their character; and of all of them it is true, that, at first, they are only employed by the educated. So long as their use was limited to this class, they underwent no change. The original plural, no matter what might be its ending, was rigidly retained. But no sooner did they cease to be purely technical than they were at once affected by the tendency of the language to

strive after uniformity. With many of them, in consequence, the English plural in *-s* either superseded the foreign plural altogether, or became established alongside of it. It has been pointed out elsewhere how that, in obedience to this rule, *omens* has driven out the original plural *omina*, once in use, and *dogmas* has almost entirely taken the place of *dogmata;* while, on the other hand, *formulae* and *formulas* may be said to be equally common, though, in technical works, the former is perhaps preferred.[1]

61. Here it is that the counteracting influence of the literary language makes itself felt. Were it not for this, it is fairly certain that the large majority of the foreign words that come to be generally employed would be fully Anglicized, and adopt the regular plural in *-s*. But in many cases the agency of the literary language makes the foreign plural perfectly familiar to all, and it becomes in time too well established to be discarded. In some kinds of words the difficulty of pronouncing what would be the Anglicized form tends to perpetuate the original one. This is familiarly seen in Latin nouns in *-is* whose plural ends in *-es*, such as *ellipsis*, *ellipses; hypothesis*, *hypotheses; oasis*, *oases*, and others; or, in Latin nouns in *-es*, in which the plural is the same as the singular, like *series* and *species*. But there are other cases in which the foreign form maintains itself without such aid. The plural *genera*, from *genus*, for example, is so firmly established that *genuses*, from present appearances, can have no hope of ever being adopted.

[1] See page 147.

62. It is natural, however, that, in many of these nouns, double forms should be produced, and indeed continue to increase as the words pass more and more from technical into common usage. The uneducated, or rather those not specially educated, cannot be expected to know the foreign plurals; and the substitution of the English plural sign *-s* gets rid, by an easy process, of all doubts and difficulties. Consequently we have *apparatus* and *apparatuses*, *radii* and *radiuses*, *memoranda* and *memorandums*, *phenomena* and *phenomenons*, *vortices* and *vortexes*, *virtuosi* and *virtuosos*, and numerous other double forms. In some cases there is a difference of meaning between these two plurals, as, for instance, between *genii* and *geniuses*, *indices* and *indexes*. In this respect the word *stamen* reverses the usual order of things; for while, in science, the Anglicized plural *stamens* is the form employed, it is the foreign plural *stamina* that is heard in the language of common life.

63. It is clear that the use of foreign plurals is certain, in some cases, to result in confusion. The great majority of men who speak English cannot be expected to be familiar with any speech but their own; and when endings are introduced of whose force they are ignorant, it is impossible that they should in every instance use them with exact propriety. Such terminations are in the nature of exceptions to a general rule, and the exceptions are but few which men will take the trouble to learn. It is too much to ask of those whose acquaintance with language is limited

only to their own, or even to the modern tongues, to be aware that *stamina* and *effluvia* and *errata* are plurals of the Latin nouns *stamen*, *effluvium*, and *erratum*. The fact, if known to them at all, must be learned in each particular instance. Under such circumstances, mistakes in usage are almost sure to arise. In the case of the words just mentioned, *effluvia* and *errata* have frequently been treated as singulars and have developed the plurals *effluvias* and *erratas*. These forms were not uncommon as far back as the seventeenth century, and have at times been used by writers of some repute. So at the present day the plural *stamina* is sometimes treated as a singular.

64. No better exemplification of the results of this confusion can be found than in the history of the two words *cherub* and *seraph*. Their respective plurals in the Hebrew, from which they were borrowed, were *cherubim* and *seraphim;* and these forms naturally were the ones first used for that number, though with the ending *-in* instead of *-im*. At this point confusion came in. *Cherubim* and *seraphim* were not felt to be plurals. The result was, that they were treated as singulars; and, being looked upon as singulars, they themselves, though really plurals, received the English plural sign *-s* in addition. Consequently the plurals with this termination came into wide use; and this corruption was thoroughly established in the language before the Middle English period. How firmly fixed it had become is evident from the fact that

these are the only forms employed by the translators of the English Bible, though they were, of course, acquainted with the Hebrew. But in the sixteenth century the language also developed the regular English forms *cherubs* and *seraphs*, which are the plurals now generally found. Still the fact remains that there have been and are in authorized usage two singular and three plural forms of these words, as may be illustrated by *cherub* and *cherubim* for the one, and *cherubs*, *cherubim*, and *cherubims* for the other.

65. Of these four classes of nouns, the plurals of which vary from the regular plural, this only remains to be said: whenever the genitive is employed, they assume an *-s*, after the manner of the ordinary inflection. This, in a few instances, renders the genitive plural different from the nominative plural. In the case of the nouns which undergo vowel-modification, that variation causes necessarily the genitive plural to differ in form from the genitive singular, as *man's*, *men's*. These complete all the exceptions to the regular inflection that Modern English presents outside of purely euphonic ones, such as the dropping of the sound of *s*, and sometimes of its sign, in the genitive of words which themselves terminate in the sound of *s*, as may be illustrated by such phrases as "for conscience' sake," and the like.

CHAPTER III.

THE ADJECTIVE.

66. THE English noun, in the course of its history, has been largely stripped of its inflections; but its losses bear little proportion to those of the adjective. To a certain extent, the same influences operated upon both. Together they underwent the changes that were brought about by the weakening of the vowels *a*, *o*, and *u* to *e*. Together they suffered from the dropping of the final *-n*. The results, accordingly, which followed in the one case took place likewise in the other, and do not need to be repeated. But the losses of the adjective at even an early period were far more extensive than those of the noun, as the confusion of the declensions was also much greater. With this part of speech, inflection has now entirely disappeared. One unchanged form has taken the place of the manifold ones originally used to express, not merely the distinction of gender, number, and case, but also of declension.

67. During the Anglo-Saxon period the adjective was distinguished by the possession of the following characteristics: —

1. Two declensions.

2. Forms differing, to a great extent, for the three genders, — the masculine, the feminine, and the neuter..

3. Two numbers, the singular and the plural, with marked differences of forms for each.

4. Four cases, — the nominative, genitive, dative, and accusative. To these most grammarians add a fifth, the instrumental, ending in *-e*, which, in the paradigms found below, is put down as a secondary form of the dative, corresponding to the dative of the masculine and neuter nouns of the vowel declension of the noun. Those who regard these forms as belonging to the instrumental once made the final *-e* long (*-ē*), as in the similar case of the noun (24).

68. Rich as the adjective evidently was in inflection during the Anglo-Saxon period, it is manifest that even then it had suffered losses. The vowels *o*, *i*, and *u* may all have been added to the stem of the adjective as to that of the noun (9) in the primitive Teutonic; but even in the Gothic, the earliest of the Teutonic languages, the stems in *i* had practically disappeared. Stems in *u* were still to be found in that tongue; but in the Anglo-Saxon they had given way almost entirely to stems in *o*, which had practically become universal.

69. The Teutonic adjective differs from the adjective of other groups of languages belonging to the Indo-European family in two respects. The first is, that nearly every adjective is declined in two different

ways. The second is, that one of these declensions is distinct from that of the noun, and has largely, instead, the inflections of the pronoun. For this reason one name given to this latter declension is the "pronominal." For a similar cause, therefore, the other declension is also called sometimes the "nominal" or noun declension, because, with the exception of the genitive plural, its forms correspond with those found in the corresponding masculine, feminine, and neuter cases of the *n*-declension of the noun. The most common terms, however, applied to the two inflections are "strong" and "weak."

There are, in addition, other names, derived from the use of the adjective, which will be the most employed here. The adjective was usually declined according to the nominal or weak declension, when the substantive which it qualified was made definite by connecting with the qualifying adjective the definite article, or a demonstrative or possessive pronoun; but, when the adjective was simply used as the substantive was, as a consequence, indefinite; and the adjective was inflected, in such cases, according to the pronominal or strong declension. Hence have arisen the terms "definite" and "indefinite" as applied to the inflection of the adjective. This double declension — a peculiar, and it must be said useless, characteristic of the primitive Teutonic — has wholly disappeared in English, but still survives in modern High German.

71. The following paradigms of the adjective *blind*,

'blind,' inflected both ways, will show the forms of the language as they are generally found in the writings of the tenth and eleventh centuries. But during the Anglo-Saxon period itself there was a good deal of sloughing off of the terminations of the adjective in the indefinite declension, thereby reducing them to the same form. Thus the nominative singular and plural feminine had frequently a distinct ending in *-u* and *-a*, respectively. The neuter of the nominative and accusative plural also sometimes ended in *-u*. In general, it may be said, that survivals of an earlier usage are apt to make their appearance in later Anglo-Saxon.

72. Indefinite (Pronominal or Strong) Declension.

	SINGULAR.			PLURAL.
	Masculine.	Feminine.	Neuter.	All Genders.
Nom.	blind,	blind,	blind,	blinde,
Gen.	blindes,	blindre,	blindes,	blindra,
Dat.	blindum, / blinde,	blindre,	blindum, / blinde,	blindum,
Acc.	blindne,	blinde,	blind.	blinde.

73. Definite (Nominal or Weak) Declension.

	SINGULAR.			PLURAL.
	Masculine.	Feminine.	Neuter.	All Genders.
Nom.	blinda,	blinde,	blinde,	blindan,
Gen.	blindan,	blindan,	blindan,	blindra,
Dat.	blindan,	blindan,	blindan,	blindum,
Acc.	blindan,	blindan,	blinde.	blindan.

For the usual termination *-ra* of the genitive plural, *-ena* sometimes occurs. This, when employed, makes the definite declension conform entirely to that of the noun.

74. As an illustration of the use of these declensions, 'a blind man' would be, in Anglo-Saxon, *blind man;* 'of a blind man' would be *blindes mannes;* whereas, making the substantive definite by connecting it with the demonstrative pronoun, 'that (or 'the') blind man' would be *se blinda man;* and 'of that (or 'the') blind man' would be *þæs blindan mannes.*

75. A glance at these paradigms is sufficient to show how rich in inflection the English adjective was in the Anglo-Saxon of the tenth and eleventh centuries, even if then it had lost some of the endings which two centuries before had belonged to it. Down to the twelfth century this fulness of inflection was on the whole retained. The same confusion, however, that overtook the noun during the centuries following the Conquest befell the adjective also. Variation of inflection was one of the first things to go. By the end of the second century after the Conquest the distinction between the definite and the indefinite adjective had not only broken down to a great extent everywhere, it had in some places disappeared entirely. The confusion in this part of speech that sprang up in consequence did not, however, result in giving exclusive ascendency to any one particular inflection, as in the case of the noun: it had rather the effect of causing the terminations to be abandoned altogether.

76. Traces of the two original declensions continued to exist, it is true, till late in the fourteenth century, and possibly till the middle of the next. Monosyllabic adjectives ending in a consonant assumed then, as before, a final *-e* in the singular when preceded by the definite article or a demonstrative or possessive pronoun. Thus, 'the blind man' would be generally written and pronounced *the blindè man.* This was occasionally true also of adjectives of more than one syllable. But after that period all trace of distinctions of this sort speedily disappeared, and disappeared completely. A relic of the definite declension may perhaps still be seen in the form *olden* (A. S., *ealdan*) in phrases such as 'the olden time'; but if *olden* in such an expression actually took its origin from that source, it is, to modern feeling, simply a collateral form of the adjective *old*, and not an oblique case of it, as etymologically it is.

77. The only further important survival of the original inflection at the beginning of the Middle English period was the distinction that still continued to prevail between the singular and the plural. Monosyllabic adjectives ending in a consonant assumed *-e* as the termination of the latter number. Thus, for illustration, *blind* would be used for all cases of the singular, when not compelled to conform to the definite declension. Similarly *blinde* would be the common form for all cases of the plural. Necessarily this distinction could not apply to adjectives which ended in *-e*, such as *newe*, *swete*, *blithe;* it had even then

ceased to apply to adjectives of more than one syllable. It was, moreover, further weakened by the fact that many adjectives which originally terminated in a consonant had, like the noun, assumed a final *-e* to which they were not entitled; and, in consequence, the ending of the singular was with them the same as that of the plural. By the close of the Middle English period the distinction between the two numbers was utterly swept away, and the unchanged radical form of the adjective was, as now, the only one employed.

78. The history of the participle does not differ from that of the adjective. It also was generally inflected both ways in Anglo-Saxon, and shared throughout in all the losses suffered by the latter.

Comparison.

79. Comparison, being really a matter of derivation, and not of inflection, does not strictly find a place in a history of the latter. It is convenient, however, to follow the usual method, and so treat it.

In all of the Indo-European tongues certain suffixes were added to the radical of the adjective to form the comparative: to form the superlative, a secondary suffix was added, usually to the suffix of the comparative. These suffixes underwent much change of form in the various languages; but their general resemblance and common descent are apparent in all.

The suffixes almost universally employed in the Teutonic to form the comparative were *is* and *ōs;* to

these another suffix, *ta*, was added to form the superlative. But in every one of the Teutonic tongues, save the Gothic, the *s* of the comparative had suffered rhotacism (14), as it did usually in Latin (cf. *alt-us*, *alt-ior*, *alt-ius*). The forms employed were, in consequence, *ir* and *ōr*. In the superlative, however, the change of *s* to *r* did not take place; and the original forms of the suffixes were therefore *ista* and *ōsta*.

80. In Anglo-Saxon, moreover, the *i* or *o* of the suffix was dropped in the comparative. In some words, however, vowel-modification produced by the *i* (20) continued to remain, and, in a few instances, transmitted the modified form to a later period. Thus *lang*, 'long,' *strang*, 'strong,' under the influence of the vowel which had come to be dropped, became *lengra* (for *lengira*) and *strengra* (for *strengira*). In a similar manner, *geong*, 'young,' became, in the comparative, *gingra*, and *eald*, 'old,' became likewise *ieldra*. The vowels *i* and *o* of the suffixes being dropped, the simple letter *r* was consequently all that was added to form the comparative; and, as adjectives in this degree were invariably inflected according to the definite declension, the termination of the nominative was therefore always *-ra* and *-re*. In the superlative, the final *-a* of the two original suffixes, *ista* and *ōsta*, was dropped, and the *i* of the ending *ist* was usually weakened into *e*. Still, whenever inflected according to the definite declension, which was usually the case, it necessarily reassumed the final *-a*, wherever that termination properly belonged.

81. The comparison of the adjective in the Anglo-Saxon period may, in consequence, be fully seen in the following examples: —

blind,	*blind,*	blind-r-a,	blind-ost.
brād,	*broad,*	brād-r-a,	brād-ost.
heard,	*hard,*	heard-r-a,	heard-ost.
strang,	*strong,*	streng-r-a,	streng-est.
eald,	*old,*	ield-r-a,	ield-est.
geong,	*young,*	gieng-r-a,	gieng-est.

82. In the Early English period the comparative suffix was no longer added directly to the stem as in Anglo-Saxon, but an *e* or an *o* was inserted between. This may have been due to a transferrence to the comparative of the *e* and *o* of the superlative endings. Confusion, at any rate, soon sprang up in the use of these two vowels. The same adjective would appear in the comparative and superlative degree, sometimes with the suffixes *-ore, -ost,* sometimes with *-ere, -est.* A representative comparison of the adjective during this transition period would be the following: —

blind,	blind-ere,	blind-est(e).
	blind-ore,	blind-ost(e).

The forms with the connective *e* became steadily predominant, and by the fourteenth century were almost invariably employed. The final *-e,* both of the comparative and of the superlative, was also at that time frequently dropped in spelling, as it had been

in pronunciation. By the beginning of the Modern English period it had disappeared altogether, leaving the comparison precisely in the situation in which it is at present.

83. The modification of the vowel seen in *strang*, 'strong,' *strengra*, 'stronger'; *lang*, 'long,' *lengra*, 'longer'; *geong*, 'young,' *gingra*, 'younger,' and other words lasted down to the fourteenth century, and later. We find then, in consequence, such comparisons as

long,	lenger(e),	lengest(e).
strong,	strenger(e),	strengest(e).
yong,	yenger(e),	yengest(e).

This is the common method, at the beginning of the Middle English period, of comparing *long* and *strong;* but in the case of *yong*, 'young,' the vowel of the positive had a good while before been adopted into the comparative and superlative. In the fifteenth century this same procedure took place in the comparison of the other two. The forms with vowel-modification disappeared from the language entirely, with the single exception of *old*, which still clings to *elder* and *eldest*, the representatives of the original comparison, although it has developed, and commonly uses, the more strictly regular forms, *older* and *oldest*.

84. In the *Ancren Riwle*, or 'Rule of Anchorites,' a work written about 1220, one of the first, if not the first, recorded instance of comparison by means of adverbs is found in the phrase *the meste dredful*. This

comparison by means of the adverbs *more* and *most* is rare in the thirteenth century; but in the fourteenth it made rapid progress. Since that time it has steadily increased in use, flourishing side by side with the suffixes in *-er* and *-est*. In the case of polysyllabic adjectives this method of comparison is now much the more common one, few late English writers employing forms like Bacon's *honorablest*, Shakspeare's *sovereignest*, or Milton's *virtuousest*, *exquisitest*, *excellentest*. But the tendency to give up the employment of such formations is not due to their being improper, but to their being difficult to pronounce.

85. The existence of two methods of comparison enabled English to gratify that disposition to make use of double comparison to which all the Teutonic tongues have manifested an inclination. This was introduced in the fourteenth century, and for the next three centuries was largely employed. In the latter part of the sixteenth century, and the beginning of the seventeenth, when it was by many regarded as an elegancy of style, it was perhaps the most prevalent. Expressions like 'the *most unkindest* cut of all' ("Julius Cæsar," act iii. scene 2), 'the *most straitest* sect of our religion' (Acts xxvi. 5), 'my *most dearest* nephew' (Sir Thomas More's "Edward V."), are to be found scattered through the pages of numerous writers of the Elizabethan age, and earlier. By Ben Jonson this is spoken of as "a certain kind of English Atticism, or eloquent phrase of speech, imitating the manner of the most ancientest and finest Grecians,

who, for more emphasis and vehemency's sake, used so to speak." This usage died out in the seventeenth century, but has been occasionally employed by English poets of the present time.[1]

86. Furthermore, the assertion, so frequently made, that adjectives expressing the highest possible degree of a quality, like *chief*, *supreme*, *perfect*, are not subject to comparison, whether logically correct or not, is not merely utterly at variance with the usage of the best writers of all periods of English, but with that of the best writers of both ancient and modern cultivated tongues. For instance, *more perfect* and *most perfect* have been employed by the greatest authors of our language with as much freedom as *perfectior* and *perfectissimus* were by Cicero. A similar statement can be made as to the use of the superlatives when two persons or things only are compared. The impropriety of this usage is strongly insisted upon by many grammarians; yet it is one which will be met with constantly in the best writers of our speech.

87. Like all the Teutonic tongues, English possessed certain adjectives, the comparison of which is irregular. The irregularity consists in the fact that the comparative and superlative are derived from a stem different from that of the positive. In Anglo-Saxon the following were the forms in common use: —

[1] *E.g.*,

> Rise up, shine, stretch thine hand out, with thy bow
> Touch the *most dimmest* heights of trembling heaven.
>
> SWINBURNE, *Atalanta in Calydon*, line 20.

gōd	*good*,	betera,	betest.
yfel,	*evil*,	wiersa,	wierrest, wierst.
micel,	*much*,	māra,	mǣst.
lȳtel,	*little*,	lǣssa,	lǣsest, lǣst.

These forms have continued with little change down to our time, though *ill* and *bad* have come into use as additional positives of *worse*. In this last word and in *less*, as will be observed, the change of *s* to *r* in the comparative (79) did not take place.

88. There has at times been prevalent a disposition to compare some of these words regularly, but it has never been sufficiently powerful to cause any general adoption of such new forms. *Gooder* and *goodest*, *badder* and *baddest*, are, however, to be met with occasionally in our literature, though they cannot be called common; and *littler* and *littlest* are forms frequently found in the English dialects, and sometimes make their appearance in the literary speech. Furthermore, the double comparative *lesser* has thoroughly established itself in good usage, though it does not seem to have come into the language till the sixteenth century. *Worser*, another double comparative, very common in the Elizabethan period, is now but rarely employed: still, the frequency of its occurrence in certain great writers, especially Shakspeare, will probably prevent its ever dying out completely.

89. A few adjectives still preserved, at the begin-

ning of the Middle English period, the practice of adding the suffixes of comparison without any connective, as in Anglo-Saxon. Thus we have the form *derre*, 'dearer.' The comparative and superlative of the adjective now spelled *high* was then frequently *herre* and *hext*. There are, moreover, other cases in which a positive was originally lacking. Such are *nerre*, 'nearer,' and *next*, 'nearest.' These were formed in Anglo-Saxon from the adverb *nēah*, as was *further* (A. S. *furðra*), from the adverb *fore*, 'before.' In this case *-ther*, another suffix of comparison unusual in Anglo-Saxon, was added to the stem. Later, these forms *further* and *furthest* seem to have supplanted the *ferre* and *ferrest* derived from the adverb *feor*, 'far,' and were assumed to belong to that word as their positive. As a natural result came still later the additional form *farther* and *farthest*, in which the vowel of the assumed positive has made its way into the comparative and superlative. No distinction in good usage exists as yet between the forms *farther* and *further*, though one may be developed in time.

90. There is still another suffix of comparison in Anglo-Saxon which has left some trace of itself in Modern English. This is the superlative suffix *-ma*, which is found frequently in Latin in the form *-mo*, as, for example, *mini-mo*. In Anglo-Saxon it is seen in *for-ma*, 'foremost,' 'first,' and *hinde-ma*, 'hindmost.' But even then the superlative force of the suffix *-ma* began to be felt as weak, and the regular suffix *-est* was added, thereby forming the double

superlative suffix *-mest*, seen in *fyrmest*. This double superlative suffix was found in a number of words in Anglo-Saxon, which came usually from adverbs and prepositions, such, for example, as *innemest*, 'inmost'; *midmest*, 'midmost'; and *norðmest*, 'northmost.' It still occurs in several words in Modern English, but it has now assumed universally the form *-most*, the *o* having been substituted for *e* as a consequence of *-mest* being confounded with the adverb *most*, used similarly to express the superlative.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PRONOUN.

91. THE pronoun is strictly divided into four classes, — the personal, the demonstrative, the interrogative, and the relative. To these is added usually a fifth class, called the indefinite, which comprehends a number of words that occupy a position half way between the noun and adjective, and sometimes partake of the nature of both. Names of other classes are also met with frequently. The most common of these are the so-called possessive pronouns, which are in reality nothing but adjectives; the reflexive pronouns, which consist simply of the personal pronouns strengthened by the word *self;* and the reciprocal pronouns, which are formed by the combination of two of the indefinite pronouns. It is only the first five classes, however, that can be said to have an independent existence.

92. As the indefinite pronouns were inflected either like the noun or the adjective, their later history is involved in that of those two parts of speech, and does not demand attention here. It is different with

the words belonging to the four other classes. These have a history of a somewhat exceptional character. Ordinarily the discussion of the pronoun begins with the personal; but as, in the later development of the English language, some of the forms of the demonstrative have gone over to the personal, it is expedient in this case to begin with the former.

The Demonstrative Pronouns.

93. The only two genuine demonstratives in Modern English are *that* and *this* with their respective plurals. But in the earliest period of the language they had a fulness of inflection of which there has been but little survival in the present tongue. Each of them will require separate consideration.

94. The following is the inflection in Anglo-Saxon of the demonstrative represented in Modern English by *that*: —

	SINGULAR.			PLURAL.
	Masc.	Fem.	Neut.	All Genders.
Nom.	sē,	sēo,	þæt,	þā,
Gen.	þæs,	þǣre,	þæs,	þāra,
Dat.	þǣm,	þǣre,	þæm,	þǣm,
Acc.	þone,	þā,	þæt,	þā.
Inst.			þȳ.	

Besides the forms just given, there are numerous varying ones which it is not necessary to specify here.

95. From the beginning the form *þe* had been found in the dialect of the North alongside of *sē*. It

also appeared in late West-Saxon; and early in Old English the form for the nominative became *þe*, *þeo*, *þæt*. The inflection at that time, however, began to fall into confusion. There came to be, as was generally the case with all parts of speech, the widest difference of usage between various portions of the country. It resulted in the gradual confounding and consequent abandonment of the inflectional forms of the pronoun *sē*. This went on increasing, so that at the beginning of the Middle English period nothing was left of the singular number but *that*, originally the neuter nominative and accusative. The plural was represented by *tho*, the Anglo-Saxon *þā*. All the other forms had either disappeared or had been put to other uses. Nor was *tho* itself the only plural. The form *thos*, or *those*, probably from the plural *þās* of the demonstrative pronoun *þes* (99), had taken a place alongside of it in the same sense. At first it was used interchangeably with it, but finally supplanted it entirely as the regular plural of *that*. On the other hand, the Early English representatives of the original plural of this pronoun did not die out. Modified as to their spelling by the corresponding forms of the similar pronoun of the Old Norse, they went over to the pronoun of the third person, and were finally adopted as its plural (108).

96. The instrumental *þȳ*, which in the North had also the form *þē*, continued, however, to remain in use with the comparative of the adjective. With this it is still constantly employed in Modern English, as it

in fact has been during every period in the history of the tongue. In such phrases as "the more, the better," *the* is often falsely explained as an article; whereas it, in fact, is nothing more than a relic of the lost instrumental case of the demonstrative pronoun.

97. It is evident that the definite article owes its origin to the demonstrative just inflected. As such, in fact, this pronoun was generally employed during the Anglo-Saxon period, though many cases occur when it is hard to decide whether the word is really used as the article or as the demonstrative. In the twelfth century the form *sē* had generally given way to the collateral form *þe*, which, as time went on, came more and more to take the place of all the other inflectional forms. This had become the established rule in the fourteenth century, in which *the*, strictly a nominative singular masculine, was employed with all nouns without respect to their gender, number, or case. Before that time, forms derived from other cases of the demonstrative are occasionally to be found, especially in the Southern dialect. This is particularly true of *þen* or *then*, from the accusative *þone*, an example of which can be seen in the following line: —

Then wey he nom to Londone, he and alle his.[1]

98. But besides the forms which have died out of the language entirely, *that* was employed to some extent also as a definite article. Though itself strictly a

[1] He took the way to London, he and all his. — *Robert of Gloucester*, vol. i., page 364.

neuter nominative or accusative, it was applied to any noun in the singular number, no matter what its gender or case. This state of things did not continue. The employment of *that* as a demonstrative, as a relative, and also as a conjunction, had insensibly the tendency to cause *the* to be regarded as exclusively the article, not only for the sake of greater definiteness, but to relieve the other word from being too much over-worked. So, during the Middle English period, *that* gave way entirely to *the*. Certain expressions in which it had once been used as an article continued, however, to survive long after any such general employment of it had been abandoned. This is true especially of the phrases *that oon*, and *that other*, meaning 'the one,' and 'the other.' In these the *a* of *that* having been weakened to *e*, the final *t* of the resulting *thet* was often transferred to the following word, giving us *the tone*, and *the tother*, sometimes *that tother*, — expressions which are not uncommon in Elizabethan English, and, indeed, are occasionally met with now. In fact, the word *tother* has often been used alone. When now so used, it is generally written with an apostrophe, *t'other*, as if the *t* were a contraction of *the*, instead of being in its origin the final letter of *thet*.

99. The following is the paradigm of the Anglo-Saxon demonstrative pronoun whose representative in Modern English is *this* : —

	SINGULAR.			PLURAL.
	Masc.	Fem.	Neut.	All Genders.
Nom.	þēs,	þēos,	þis,	þās,
Gen.	þises,	þisse,	þises,	þissa,
Dat.	þisum,	þisse,	þisum,	þisum,
Acc.	þisne,	þās,	þis,	þās.
Inst.			þȳs.	

As in the case of *sē*, there are numerous variant forms not recorded here.

100. Even less of this pronoun has survived than of the pronoun *sē*. It is the neuter nominative and accusative that has alone remained of the singular; and the dropping of the other forms not only took place early, but had been completed by the close of the thirteenth century, though sporadic examples of some of them occur later. In the fourteenth century, only the form *this* is found in the singular. The original plural *þās* had become confounded with the plural of *sē*, and gradually ceased to be regarded as belonging to this demonstrative (95). Its place as plural was taken by the surviving singular form *this*, to which *-e*, the plural ending of the adjective, was sometimes added, giving the form *thise*. A collateral form was *these*, which gradually supplanted the two others, and became, in the Middle English period, the regular plural, which it has ever since remained. The form *this*, however, continued to survive, and, as a genuine plural, is far from uncommon in the sixteenth century. Especially is this true of certain expressions such as "this twenty

weeks," "this hundred pounds," which are still more or less in use, and are now ordinarily explained on syntactical grounds, which do not require *this* to be regarded as a plural. Such it certainly was not in the original form of the phrases.[1]

101. Besides this, there were in Anglo-Saxon certain other words which are frequently reckoned as demonstrative pronouns. They are compounds of *lic*, 'like.' One of them is *ilc*, 'same,' which lasted down to the fifteenth century in the literary language as *ilk*, and then passed out of common use; but it was preserved in the speech of the North, and is made somewhat familiar to us by its frequent occurrence in the poetry written in the Scotch dialect. Another of these demonstratives was *þylc*, 'that same,' 'that,' which in Early English usually appeared as *thilke*, but died out before the beginning of Modern English. Another compound was *swilc*, which, after passing through many intermediate forms of spelling, varying with pronunciation, — among which are *swilche*, *swulche*, *sulche*, *swiche*, *siche*, and *soche*, — finally had one of them, *such*, adopted into the language of literature as the established form. The vulgar speech still preserves the spelling and pronunciation *sich*, corresponding strictly to the correlative *which* (136).

102. Of these four, *ilc* followed the definite declension of the adjective in Anglo-Saxon; the other two, the indefinite; and they all naturally shared in the

[1] Compare, e.g., *þis feowertig daga* (*Blickling Homilies*, page 35), in which *daga* is the genitive plural.

fate that overtook those inflections. Besides these, there was originally in the language a third genuine demonstrative, *geon*, corresponding to the German *jener*. But even in the Anglo-Saxon period it was becoming obsolete, only one instance of its use having been so far recorded. In the form *yon*, however, it was preserved in the Northern dialect, and has extended from that to the language of literature; but it is rarely used outside of poetry.

The Personal Pronouns.

103. The following are the forms of the pronouns of the first, second, and third persons, as found in Anglo-Saxon. The third person is the only one that distinguishes gender, and that in the singular alone.

FIRST PERSON.

	Singular.	Dual.	Plural.
Nom.	ic,	wīt,	wē,
Gen.	mīn,	uncer,	ūser, ūre,
Dat.	mē,	unc,	ūs,
Acc.	mec, mē.	uncit, unc.	ūsic, ūs.

SECOND PERSON.

	Singular.	Dual.	Plural.
Nom.	þū,	gīt,	gē,
Gen.	þīn,	incer,	ēower,
Dat.	þē,	inc,	ēow,
Acc.	þec, þē.	incit, inc.	ēowic, ēow.

THIRD PERSON.

	SINGULAR.			PLURAL.
	Masculine.	Feminine.	Neuter.	All Genders.
Nom.	hē,	hēo,	hit,	hī,
Gen.	his,	hire,	his,	hira,
Dat.	him,	hire,	him,	him,
Acc.	hine.	hī, / hēo.	hit.	hī.

Here, as in the case of the other pronouns, numerous variant forms are not recorded.

104. Comparing these forms with those found in Modern English, it is evident at once that the personal pronouns have retained more of the original inflection than either the noun or the adjective. It is they and the interrogative *who* that alone continue to make a distinction in form between the nominative and objective cases. Moreover, whatever losses they suffered, they suffered them before the Middle English period; and certain general statements can be made in regard to their forms as seen in Anglo-Saxon, contrasted with those exhibited by them even in Middle English.

105. The most noticeable thing is the fact that, in this, the earliest form of the language, the pronouns of the first and second persons still continued to retain the dual number. It had died out of the noun, the adjective, and the verb; but in Anglo-Saxon, as in the other early Teutonic tongues, it still survived in these two pronouns. But in it, as likewise in the others,

it showed signs of giving way. Even in the ninth and tenth centuries it was not unusual to strengthen the dual forms by one of the words meaning 'both' or 'two.' The nominative dual *wit*, meaning 'we two,' received not unfrequently the word *bēgen* or *bū*, 'both,' as in the following line: —

> Ne forlǣte ic þē, þenden *wit* lifiað *bū*.[1]
>
> CÆDMON, *Genesis*, line 2256.

Instances also occur in which *bū*, 'both,' and *twā* or *tū*, 'two,' are together added to the form of the dual. As the number was by no means essential to expression, its fate was sealed as soon as the force originally belonging to it was felt to be going. It survived the Norman Conquest some two hundred years; but it was never in any sense common. In the thirteenth century it disappeared entirely.

106. The second fact to be noticed is, that the feminine nominative singular of the third person, and all the forms of the plural, have been entirely supplanted by the corresponding forms of the demonstrative pronoun *sē*, *sēo*, *þæt* (94). This transition began to take place during the Old English period, but was not fully completed till the fifteenth century. It doubtless owed its origin to the desire of distinguishing between the forms of the pronoun, which had frequently come to be the same for different genders, cases, and numbers. The form *he*, for example, sometimes represents in Early English the modern

[1] I shall not desert thee while we two both live.

masculine *he*, the feminine *she*, and the plural *they*; and likewise *him* or *hem* stands for the modern masculine *him*, the neuter *it*, and the plural *them*.

107. The resort to the demonstrative was not unnatural. In the case of the feminine pronouns it began to manifest itself in the twelfth century. A number of forms based upon *sēo*, 'that one' (94) early took their places alongside of *hēo*, though it is not impossible that they were influenced to some extent by the latter. Among them were *scheo*, *scho*, *sco*, *sche*, and *she*, the last of which prevailed over all others, and in the fifteenth century became the standard form. As usual, in all these movements the Northern dialect led the way; but in every case the triumph of the newer forms was a very slow one.

108. This is especially true of the substitution of the plural forms of the demonstrative, *þā*, *þāra*, and *þǣm* for the original plural of the third person. As a result, two sets of forms for this number existed side by side for a long period, *hi*, *here*, and *hem* in the South, *thei*, *their*, and *them* in the North. In the literary language of the Midland during the fourteenth century there was a temporary compromise between these rival inflections. *Thei* or *they* appears in the nominative plural, *here* and *hem* in the oblique cases. This is the regular declension in Chaucer. In the fifteenth century, however, *here* and *hem* were universally displaced in the literary speech by *their* and *them*. It is to be added that the forms which these words assumed in English were largely influenced by the cor-

responding Old Norse forms, *þeir*, *þeirra*, *þeim*, that tongue having profoundly affected the Northern dialect in which this new plural first appeared. Furthermore, the old objective *hem* has left a relic of itself in modern speech in the contraction *'em*, which, in books printed in the first part of the seventeenth century, often appears as *'hem*, as if it had been contracted from *them*, and were not itself the original form.

109. The third point to be marked is that the original Anglo-Saxon accusative has disappeared, and the modern objective case is derived, not from it, but from the dative; that is to say, *me* comes from the dative *mē*, and not the accusative *mec; him*, from *him*, and not from *hine; her*, from *hire*, and not from *hī* or *hēo*. The only exception to this rule is to be found in the neuter pronoun of the third person. In this the modern form *it* has been derived from the accusative, and not the dative. Yet how universal was the preference for the latter case is made clear by the fact that, when the plural of the demonstrative *sē* was introduced into the pronoun of the third person, it was the dative *þǣm*, 'them,' and not the accusative *þā*, that was adopted for the objective.

110. This disuse of the accusative began early. Even in Anglo-Saxon the strengthened forms *mec*, *þec*, *ūsic*, and *ēowic*, were largely discarded for *mē*, *þē*, *ūs*, and *ēow*, which were the same as the dative; and the former died out immediately after the Conquest, if, indeed, they can be said to be existing at the time of it. The accusatives of the third person lasted longer;

but by the end of the twelfth century they were sometimes supplanted by the dative, and, by the end of the thirteenth, they had almost universally been abandoned. In the neuter pronoun the dative form *him* and the accusative *hit* or *it* were both for a long period in use: indeed, instances of the former occur late in the sixteenth century. But much before that time, under the increasing tendency to regard *him* as belonging exclusively to the masculine, the use of *it* for the neuter became general; and for the sake of distinction, this accusative was adopted in Modern English as the form for the new objective case.

111. Besides these general statements, certain special changes are to be noted in the form of the pronouns. In the first person *ic* passed in Southern English into the form *ich;* in Northern English into the form *ik*. From both of these words the final consonant or consonants occasionally fell away, leaving nothing but the vowel. This did not take place often in very Early English, but it occurred in both dialects, though perhaps more commonly in that of the North. Still in all regions of the country, the full and the shortened forms were used interchangeably, *ich* and *I* or *ik* and *I*, being found in the same work and sometimes in the same sentence. The practice increased of using the simple vowel alone, especially in the country north of the Thames. In the fourteenth century it had become almost universally adopted in the language of literature. For a long while it was generally written with a small letter, as it is now by

the uneducated; but before the beginning of the Modern English period, it was regularly designated by a capital.

112. In the first part of the Early English period the genitives of the first and second personal pronouns often dropped their final *-n*, and accordingly exhibited the double forms *min* and *mi*, *thin* and *thi*. The neuter *hit* came at the same time under the influence of a tendency which has been very powerful in all periods of the language, and dropped its initial *h*. Still both *it* and *hit* flourished side by side for several hundred years; and while, after the fourteenth century, the former became more common, the latter did not die out entirely till the sixteenth. A form *ha* or *a*, used for several pronouns, and among them *he*, made its appearance at the beginning of the Early English period. Though still found in the provincial dialects, it is only of importance here from the fact that it is constantly employed by the Elizabethan dramatists, and put into the mouths of the highest as well as the lowest characters. A relic of it is preserved in the interjection *quotha*, that is, 'quoth he.'

113. At the beginning of the Middle English period the following paradigms of the personal pronouns exemplify the usage of Chaucer, its representative author. In all cases where varying forms in equally common use exist, — and there are numbers of such, — those most closely resembling Modern English have been selected.

	FIRST PERSON.		SECOND PERSON.	
	Singular.	Plural.	Singular.	Plural.
Nom.	I,	we,	thou,	ye,
Gen.	{min, mi,}	oure,	{thin, thi,}	youre,
Objec.	me.	us.	thee.	you.

THIRD PERSON.

	SINGULAR.			PLURAL.
	Masculine.	Feminine.	Neuter.	All Genders.
Nom.	he,	she,	{hit, it,}	they,
Gen.	his,	hire,	his,	here,
Objec.	him.	hire.	{hit, it.}	hem.

114. That the Middle English personal pronoun is about the same as the Modern English, save in certain forms of the third person, is evident at a glance. *Their* and *them* took the place of *here* and *hem* in the fifteenth century, as has been stated. Up to the seventeenth century, however, *his* remained as the genitive of both the neuter and the masculine, just as the dative for both had at one time been *him*. But by the end of the fifteenth century the *h* had been generally discarded from *hit*. In consequence, *his* did not seem so properly the genitive of *it* as it did of *he*. As the disposition grew in strength to regard *his* as belonging exclusively to the latter, various methods were resorted

to in order to avoid employing it as a neuter. One of the first of these was to use *it*, without any inflection, as a genitive; and this occurs certainly as early as the fourteenth century, and was common during the fifteenth and sixteenth. The creation and gradual adoption of the form *its* has already been told, and need not be here repeated.[1] Before the Restoration of the Stuarts, in 1660, it had become firmly established in the language; and, by the end of the seventeenth century, most men, doubtless, supposed it had always been in existence. Milton is the principal writer of the middle of the seventeenth century who exhibits any reluctance in using it. As is well known, it is found but three times in his poetry, and then only where it is almost essential to clearness. It, however, was sometimes used by him in his prose.[2]

115. One thing to be especially marked in the paradigms given of the Middle English personal pronouns is, that there is no confusion between the nominative and objective. In Chaucer's writings *ye* and *you*, for example, are never confounded. The former is invariably the case of the subject; the latter, the case of the object. Occasional instances of confusion between the two cases have been discovered in writings of the fourteenth century; but they are so few in number, that it is more reasonable to attribute the great majority of them to blunders by the copyists rather than to intention on the part of the author. Undoubtedly the resemblance in writing, already

[1] Pages 165–167. [2] E.g., *Areopagitica*, Arber's reprint, page 71.

pointed out,[1] between the letters *y* and the Rune *þ* contributed largely to the confusion of the two forms, so that *þou* was frequently indistinguishable from *you;* at any rate, it was not distinguished from it. As a result, *you* was supposed to be meant when *thou* was intended. As is inevitable in such cases, what was originally a blunder came soon to be accepted as an authorized form. Besides this, there were other agencies at work to break down the distinction between the nominative *ye* and the objective *you*. In the fifteenth century this result had come to pass to a considerable extent. Still it was not till after the middle of the sixteenth century that the confusion between the two forms showed itself on any large scale. Nor did it then completely. Our version of the Bible, for instance, has regularly *ye* in the nominative and *you* in the accusative: but in this particular it is more archaic than is the language of the period to which it nominally belongs.

116. With the plural of the second person this confusion of cases has become permanently established in the language. *You*, the representative of the original dative and accusative, is now the regular form for both nominative and objective. *Ye* is also still used, but likewise indifferently in the two cases, and with comparative infrequency in either. After the middle of the sixteenth century, it looked for a time as if it were possible that a similar result might be reached in the case of all the personal pronouns.

[1] See pages 34–35.

The distinction between nominative and objective was showing everywhere symptoms of breaking down. In fact, if the language of the Elizabethan drama represents fairly the language of society, — and we can hardly take any other view, — great license in this respect had begun to prevail. *Me*, *thee*, *us*, *you*, *him*, *her*, and *them* were frequently treated as nominatives; while the corresponding nominative forms were treated as objectives. Modernized editions of the authors of that period do not in this respect represent justly the usage of the time, as in all or nearly all of them changes in the text are silently made. But, with the exception of *ye* and *you*, this confusion of case did not become universally accepted. The original distinction gradually reasserted itself, and is now perhaps more strongly insisted upon, at least by grammarians, than at any period since the sixteenth century. Yet the popular, and to some extent, the literary speech has preserved expressions which still show this disregard of strict inflection. One of these is the frequent use of the objective case after *than* and *as*. But it is more particularly noticeable where the pronoun *I* is the second of two pronouns that are governed by a preposition or a verb. One of these colloquial phrases, *between you and I*, has been exceedingly common from the time of Queen Elizabeth, and can be found in the writings of many well-known authors in our speech.

117. Certain other phrases, such as, *it is me*, *it is him*, *it is her*, are much oftener heard at the present

day than the foregoing. They are perhaps more common than during the Elizabethan period. The wider extension of their use may possibly be due to an imitation, conscious or unconscious, of French expressions like *c'est moi;* at any rate, they were very frequent in the eighteenth century, when the influence of the French language on our own was most decided. The expressions, condemned as they almost invariably are by grammarians, have on their side the authority of many of the most eminent writers of our tongue.[1]

[1] Out of scores and scores of instances of the various locutions mentioned that could be quoted, I give here a few examples, citing most of them from authors of the Elizabethan period, educated at the universities. Accordingly, but one has been taken from Shakspeare, who would furnish a large number: —

What difference is between the duke and *I*?
WEBSTER, *White Devil*, page 37 (Ed. of 1861).

Nor earth nor heaven shall part my love and *I*.
GREENE, *James IV.*, act i. sc. 1.

Malvolio. Besides, you waste the treasure of your time with a foolish knight.
Aguecheck. That's *me*, I warrant you.
SHAKSPEARE, *Twelfth Night*, act ii. sc. 5.

Let it be *me*.
GREENE, *Bacon and Bungay*, page 170 (Ed. of 1861).

Nor *thee* nor *them*, thrice-noble Tamburlaine,
Shall want my heart to be with gladness pierced
To do you honor and security.
MARLOWE, *Tamburlaine I.*, act i. sc. 2.

O wretched Abigail, what hast *thee* done?
MARLOWE, *Jew of Malta*, act ii. sc. 4.

Be *thee* vicegerent of his royalty.
GREENE and LODGE, *Looking-Glass for London*, page 118 (Ed. of 1861).

It is to be added that the expressions, *it is I, it is he,* and the similar ones, are not usual before the fifteenth century, if they exist at all before that time. The form in Anglo-Saxon was, *Ic eom hit,* 'I am it.' In Old English this usually appeared as, *I it am.* Later it is found in Chaucer as, *it am I.*

118. It has already been remarked that the Anglo-Saxon genitives *mīn* and *þīn* frequently dropped the *-n* in the Old English period. Precisely corresponding in form to these genitives were the adjective pronouns *mīn* and *þīn,* which had originally a full set of inflections, according to the indefinite declension. These

For Amurath's stout stomach shall undo
Both *he himself* and all his other crew.
GREENE, *Alphonsus,* act v. page 245 (Ed. of 1861).

What would you with the king? Is it *him* you seek?
MARLOWE, *Edward II.,* act ii. sc. 5.

'Tis not thy wealth, but *her* that I esteem.
MARLOWE, *Jew of Malta,* act ii. sc. 4.

'Tis *her* I so admire.
FLETCHER, *Faithful Shepherdess,* act i. sc. 3.

Thyself and *them* shall never part from me
Before I crown you kings in Asia.
MARLOWE, *Tamburlaine I.,* act i. sc. 2.

It was not *me* you followed last night to my lodging from the Park. — WYCHERLEY, *Love in a Wood,* act v. sc. 5.

I may be pretty well assured it is not *me.*
ADDISON, *Drummer,* act ii. sc. 1.

It is evident, then, that if Atossa was the first inventress of epistles, these that carry the name of Phalaris, who was so much older than *her,* must needs be an imposture. — BENTLEY, *Dissertation upon Phalaris* (Ed. Dyce), volume ii. page 126.

also dropped the final *-n* at the same time. Corresponding to the genitive plurals, also, were the adjective pronouns *ūre* or *ūser*, 'our,' and *ēower*, 'your.' The corresponding adjective pronoun of the third person was *sīn;* but, even when Anglo-Saxon was committed to writing, it was already on the point of dying out. *Sīn* occurs not often under any circumstances, and almost wholly in poetry, though it is not unknown to prose.[1] Its loss has been a serious disadvantage to the precision and clearness of the language; for while its place was taken in Anglo-Saxon by the genitives *his*, *hire*, and *hira* of the third personal pronoun, it was not filled.

119. These genitives of the first and second personal pronouns were, therefore, the same in form as the nominative singular of the corresponding possessive pronouns during the Anglo-Saxon period. But, inasmuch as then the former were governed directly by verbs or prepositions, while the latter had full adjective inflections, the distinction between them was in most cases apparent. The changes that subsequently took place in the language rendered this distinction less obvious. On the one hand, the genitive became more and more confined to the expression of the possessive relation, and was no longer made the object of verbs and prepositions. On the other hand, the adjective inflection of the possessive pronoun had entirely disappeared. As a result the distinction between the two classes became rather nominal than real.

[1] E.g., *Blickling Homilies*, page 125, line 21.

Whether the same word should be regarded as the genitive of the personal pronoun, or itself as the possessive adjective pronoun, depended mainly upon definition. The genitive, especially in the plural, lasted down, to be sure, to the end of the fourteenth century, in phrases in which there could be no doubt as to its being a personal pronoun, such as, *at oure alther cost*,[1] meaning 'at the cost of us all;' or, *I am yowre aller hed, I am yowre aller hele*,[2] that is, 'I am the head of you all, I am the salvation (*heal*) of you all.' Even down to the beginning of the sixteenth century similar usages occasionally occur.[3] Still such expressions as these, comparatively infrequent then, have not been preserved in Modern English: hence some grammarians consider the genitive of the personal pronouns as no longer existing, terming these forms, wherever they occur, possessive adjective pronouns. In either case their history is the same.

120. The contracted forms *mi* and *thi*, for *min* and *thin*, made their appearance at the end of the twelfth century, and were at first used indifferently. As early certainly as the fourteenth century, however, a practice sprang up of using *min* and *thin* before words beginning with a vowel or silent *h*, and *mi* and *thi* before consonants. This custom, it may be added,

[1] Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales*, Prologue, line 799.

[2] Langland, *Piers Plowman*, Text B, xix. 468.

[3] It was *their bothes* ('of them both') dishonoures and theirs and hirs also to suffer hym in sanctuary. — SIR THOMAS MORE, *Life of Edward V.* in Ellis's reprint of Harding's *Chronicle*, etc., page 487.

extended to *non*, 'none,' with the result that the abbreviated form *no* has become the established one in Modern English. The practice was observed, with a fair degree of regularity, up to the latter half of the sixteenth century, after which it became largely a matter of individual choice. In process of time *my* and *thy*, as they had then generally come to be spelled, were used almost exclusively before nouns, and *mine* and *thine* when standing alone in the predicate, except in a few phrases, such as 'mine host,' that had survived the general abandonment of the ancient usage. The *e* of *mine* and *thine* is, of course, inorganic.

121. The restriction of *mine* and *thine* to the absolute construction in the predicate was undoubtedly aided, to a great extent, by the creation of the forms *oures*, *youres*, and *hires*, 'hers,' and *heres*, 'theirs,' and their confinement to this same employment. Originally the pronoun, when used absolutely in the predicate, had simply the form of the genitive of the personal pronoun, which was the same as the nominative of the possessive. This was the prevalent practice, not only in the Anglo-Saxon, but during the Old English period also, at least in the Midland and Southern dialects. For example, the sentence 'the land is *ours*' would in the thirteenth century have appeared as 'the land is *oure*.' The feeling, that, in such constructions, the pronouns were really genitives of the personal pronoun, and not possessive adjectives, seems to have been the ruling one. But by the fourteenth century, *-s* had become the common termina-

tion of the genitive of all nouns, and was the termination of *his*, the masculine and neuter genitive of the third personal pronoun. This letter was in consequence added by a false analogy to the other forms. Accordingly, early in the Middle English period, *oures*, *youres*, *hires*, 'hers,' *heres*, 'theirs,' took their place alongside of the earlier *oure*, *youre*, *hire*, and *here*. The former, therefore, are strictly double genitives. They first made their appearance in the speech of the North, but, in the fourteenth century, became thoroughly established in the literary language of the Midland dialect. For a time they flourished side by side with the forms without *-s*, which etymologically are more correct. In the fifteenth century they displaced the latter altogether, and are now the ones exclusively in use in the construction mentioned.[1] When *their* was adopted as the genitive of the personal pronoun, in place of *here* (108), it also added an *-s* in such cases, like the others.

122. This result did not happen, however, without a struggle. Other forms existed, which have left traces of themselves, in the language of the uneducated, to this day. The old *n*-declension, both of the noun and adjective, still survived in the fourteenth century in certain parts of the country. It was then, as we have seen, applied to words which had no right to it in Anglo-Saxon. Various dialects, consequently,

[1] The latest use of the simple form — not as an intentional archaism — I have observed is in Capgrave's *Chronicle of England* (about 1450), under date of A.D. 1024: "They feyned it was *her* (hers)."

especially of the South of England, instead of forming, in these cases, a double genitive in *-s*, formed one in *-n*. The result was, that, in place of *oures*, *youres*, *hires*, and *heres*, they had the forms *ouren*, *youren*, *hiren*, *heren* (i.e., their'n). To this the analogy of *mine* and *thine* unquestionably contributed. These forms in *-n* are not infrequent in the Wycliffite version of the Bible, made about 1380. In consequence, during the latter half of the fourteenth century, the genitive of the personal pronoun, when used in the predicate, can be found in three forms, — without any ending, with the ending *-s*, or with the ending *-n*. The following examples will show this clearly: —

> I wil be *youre* in al that ever I may.
> CHAUCER, *Canon's Yeoman's Tale*, line 237.
>
> My gold is *youres*, whanne that you lest.
> *Shipman's Tale*, line 284.

But the erthetilieris seiden togidere, This is the eire; come ye, sle we hym, and the eritage schal be *ourun*. — *Mark* xii. 8.

Blessed be the pore in spirit, for the kyngdam in hevenes is *heren* (theirs). — *Matthew* v. 3.

Restore thou to hir alle thinges that ben *hern* (hers).
II Kings viii. 6 (Purvey's Recension).

123. The forms in *-n*, however, speedily disappeared from the language of literature, though they have exhibited a marked vitality in the language of low life. Here, again, whenever *their* took the place of *here*, *their'n* was formed, after the analogy of the other forms in *-n*, by those who employed the latter.

In fact, this was sometimes extended to *his*, giving us *hisen* or *his'n* as a collateral form. This can be found as early as the fifteenth century. In one of the manuscripts of Chaucer occur, for example, the following lines: —

> Hire fredom fond Arcyte in such manere
> That al *hisen* is that hirs was, moche or lyte.
> *Anelida and Arcite*, line 107 (Harleian MS. 372).

These forms in *-n*, it is to be said finally, were once falsely explained as contractions of *our own*, *your own*, *her own*, and so forth.

124. A somewhat peculiar use of *his* to take the place of the ending of the genitive case developed itself in Old English, and prevailed somewhat extensively in the early portion of the Modern English period. We can see it exemplified in the following passage from Shakspeare's fifty-fifth sonnet: —

> Nor Mars *his* sword nor war's quick fire shall burn
> The living record of your memory.

Traces of this usage can be discovered even in Anglo-Saxon.[1] In the first text of Layamon, written about 1200, it occurs rarely, but is frequently found in the second text, supposed to be about fifty years later. But it was not till the sixteenth century that it began to appear often. It is almost always used with names of persons, particularly with those ending with the

[1] Mätzner quotes from Numbers xiii. 29: þǣr we gesāwon Enac his cynryn. In Authorized Version: We saw the children of Anak there. Ib., verse 28.

sound of *s*. After the middle of the seventeenth century it was but little employed, though it lasted into the eighteenth. The title of Pope's translation from Statius, first printed in 1712, has, for instance, the heading, "The First Book of Statius his Thebais." In scattered instances and in peculiar constructions this use of *his* can be found much later.

125. This peculiar use of *his* as a genitive sign led to the belief which once largely prevailed, that the *-es* of the genitive singular — which in Early English often appeared as *-is* or *-ys* — was in its origin a contraction of the pronoun *his*. This was not only widely accepted, but was at one time held and taught by many grammarians, in particular by those of the seventeenth century. Even as late as 1711, Addison, in commenting on the letter *s*, gives in his adhesion to this view. "I might here observe," he says, "that the same single letter on many occasions does the office of a whole word and represents the *his* and *her* of our forefathers."[1] This belief in regard to *his* led to the extension in the sixteenth century of the same construction to *her* with feminine nouns, and occasionally to *their* with the plural. For instance, Barnabe Riche, in his story of Apollonius and Silla, in the work published in 1581, under the title of "Riche his Farewell to Militarie Profession," begins his account of the heroine with these words: —

The daughter her name was Silla.[2]

[1] *Spectator*, No. 135, Aug. 4. 1711.

[2] Shakspeare Society reprint (1846), page 69. For *their* as

Still, as in the similar case of *his*, the pronoun was rarely used, save with the names of persons.

126. In Anglo-Saxon the simple personal pronouns were constantly employed also as reflexives. This use of them has lasted down through all periods of the language to this day, though it is far less common now than formerly. From its very nature it led frequently to ambiguity. If there were no other reflexives than the simple personal pronouns, such an expression as "he killed him" would have, beside the sense it now has, the possible signification of "he killed himself." Consequently a disposition began to be manifested in the earliest speech, to make the reflexive sense more clear and emphatic. This was accomplished by the addition of the forms of the adjective *self* to the corresponding forms of the personal pronouns; thus the dative *himself* would be in Anglo-Saxon *him selfum;* the accusative, *hine selfne*. This tendency has gone on increasing to the present time, so that outside of the language of poetry, the simple personal pronouns are rarely used any longer in a reflexive sense. When this does occur, it is usually in phrases where the context would dispel any doubt as to the meaning. It is perhaps most common when the pronoun is preceded by a preposition, though even here it is far from being universal. In such an

representing the '*s* of the genitive, the following example will serve, from Humphrey Monmouth's petition to Cardinal Wolsey, in 1528. "I did promise him (Tyndale) *x l.* sterling to paie for my father and mother *there* sowles and al Christen sowles."

expression as "he looked about him," *him* is a genuine reflexive, precisely equivalent in meaning to *himself*. On the other hand, in the expression "he looked at him," *him* is the simple personal pronoun.

127. During the Old English period, *self*, like other adjectives, gradually lost its inflection. In consequence it was often looked upon, both then and later, merely as a substantive, forming by its combination with the personal pronoun an independent word. This tendency was even seen in the Anglo-Saxon.[1] This seems to be the reason why *self*, when stripped of its inflections, was joined to the genitive of the pronouns of the first and second persons, or, perhaps, it would be more correct to say, it was treated as a substantive, with which agreed the possessive adjective pronouns corresponding to the genitive of these personal pronouns. At any rate, during the Old English period, the forms *myself*, *thyself*, *ourself*, and *yourself* became established in the language and have since remained unchanged. Along with them were also in use, *me self*, *thee self*, *us self*, and *you self*. Both kinds of forms, in fact, were sometimes employed in the same work. Still the latter, based upon the joining of *self* to the original dative case, called later the objective, could not maintain itself against the former, and died out during the Middle English period.

128. The case was different with the pronouns of

[1] Mätzner cites, along with others, the following extract from the Anglo-Saxon Gospel of Nicodemus, 34: *Hym sylf* wæs on heofenas farende.

the third person. There the forms resulting from the combination of *self* with the dative became the ones established in the language. *Himself*, *herself*, and *hemself*, "themselves," were the forms early in established use. *Itself* really belongs to the same class, because in the adoption of the dative to represent both the original dative and accusative, *it*, though strictly an accusative, had for reasons previously given (110) become the new objective. Later there were attempts occasionally made to cause these reflexives to conform to those of the first and second persons. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries particularly, *his self* and *their self* or *their selves* are occasionally found; but they never could be said to have anything like the prevalence of the common forms.

129. The form *themselves*, for which *theirselves* was sometimes substituted, represents a plural inflection which these pronouns were late in receiving. The only modification that for a long time took place in them was the frequent adding of the syllable *-en*, — sometimes abbreviated to *e*, — giving such forms as *myselve*(*n*), *himselve*(*n*). This termination, however, furnished merely a collateral form: it did not indicate inflection. The plural of these reflexives remained the same as the singular; no distinction existed between them till towards the close of the Middle English period. As late as the beginning of the sixteenth century *ourself* and *yourself*, for illustration, would be generally, perhaps invariably, the same in both numbers. In the first half of the century, however, the plural

ending *-s* was added to the reflexive forms which were plural in signification, and this practice speedily became universal. In conclusion, the disposition to use, as the subject of the sentence, the personal pronoun compounded with *self* in place of the corresponding simple personal pronoun[1] goes back to the Old English, if not to the Anglo-Saxon,[2] period, and has been in common and constant use since.

130. There remains a usage the consideration of which belongs more strictly to syntax than even the one just mentioned; but, as it is of some importance as connected with the disuse of certain forms of the verb, it will receive a slight notice at this point. This is the general abandonment in English of the singular pronoun of the second person, and the substitution of the plural in its place. In this respect our tongue does not differ from the other cultivated tongues of modern Europe; but, in its avoidance of this particular form, it has gone far beyond them all. In them it is the language of superiority, or affectionate intimacy; with us it is, outside of its employment in poetry, limited, for all practical purposes, to the language of prayer. This result has been reached gradually. The Anglo-Saxon, like the Greek and Latin, never used, in addressing an individual, anything but the second person of the singular; and this continued to be the case, in our tongue also, for nearly two centuries after the Conquest.

[1] *E.g.* Myself am Naples. SHAKSPEARE, *Tempest*, act i. sc. 2.
[2] See sec. 127, note.

131. The substitution of the plural *ye* and *you* for *thou* and *thee* in speaking to a single person, made its appearance in the language towards the close of the thirteenth century. At the outset it was not merely little in use, it was restricted to narrow and well-defined limits. When so substituted, it was generally, if not invariably, employed as a mark of respect in addressing a superior. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the use of the plural steadily increased, and in the sixteenth century it became the standard form of polite conversation. *Thou* and *thee* followed to some extent the history of similar forms in other tongues. For some two centuries it may be said that in a general way they were employed to denote affection or inferiority or contempt. There is a well-known passage in Shakspeare, in which one of the characters is represented as urging another to write an insulting challenge.[1] "Taunt him," he says, "with the license of ink: if thou *thou'st* him some thrice, it shall not be amiss." This example is frequently coupled with the abusive language directed by Coke, the attorney-general, towards Sir Walter Raleigh, when the latter was undergoing trial for high treason in November, 1603. During the proceedings Raleigh was addressed as *you* by those acting as judges. This pronoun was sometimes employed also by the attorney-general, but whenever he wished to express denunciation, he resorted to *thou*, and did so intentionally. When Raleigh denied that he was responsible for Lord

[1] *Twelfth Night*, act iii. sc. 2.

Cobham's course, Coke retorted, "All that he did was by thy instigation, thou viper: for I *thou* thee, thou traitor!"[1]

132. Such examples are sufficient to show that the use of the singular towards persons of the same station, but standing in no special relation of intimacy to one another, was intended to be insulting and was so regarded. Its employment towards inferiors and for the purpose of expressing affection can be met with constantly, especially in the pages of the Elizabethan dramatists. Yet the distinction between *thou, thee* and *ye, you*, was never thorough-going in English. The rigid rules that have been authoritatively laid down for their exact employment will not stand the test of careful examination. The same character addressing another in the same conversation will frequently pass from the singular pronoun to the plural, and from the plural pronoun to the singular, without any conceivable reason. The transition will sometimes even occur in the same sentence. In particular, it is often the case that the nominative or objective of the singular will be found immediately joined with the possessive pronoun representing the plural. The pages of any Elizabethan

[1] The following conversation between the two, later in the trial, will show the use of these pronouns: —

Coke. Thou art the most vile and execrable traitor that ever lived.

Raleigh. You speak indiscreetly, barbarously, and uncivilly.

Coke. I want words sufficient to express thy viperous treason.

Raleigh. I think you want words, indeed, for you have spoken one thing half a dozen times.

Coke. Thou art an odious fellow; thy name is hateful to all the realm of England for thy pride.

dramatist will exemplify these practices.[1] But after the sixteenth century, the singular form was more and more disused, and by the eighteenth had become comparatively infrequent. As *thou* was almost the only subject the second person of the verb ever had, the disuse of the pronoun led indirectly to the comparative disuse of this form of the verb.

The Interrogative Pronouns.

133. In the Anglo-Saxon period the interrogative pronouns were *hwā*, 'who'; *hwæt*, 'what'; *hwilc*, 'of what sort'; and *hwæðer*, 'which of two.' During the twelfth century the words which had originally begun with the combination *hw* changed their form, and were spelled with *wh;* and this has from that time remained the universal practice. Of these four interrogatives, *hwilc* and *hwæðer* had a full set of adjective inflections according to the indefinite declension, varying therefore with the gender. On the other hand, *hwā* was used both as a masculine and a feminine, the special feminine form which belonged to the primitive Teutonic having disappeared from the Anglo-Saxon and from the other sister-languages, with the exception of the Gothic. Of course, *hwæt* is strictly the neuter of *hwā*.

134. In Anglo-Saxon, *hwā* and *hwæt* have the following inflections: —

[1] *E.g.* I am more serious than my custom: *you*
Must be so too, if heed me; which to do
Trebles *thee* o'er.
SHAKSPEARE, *Tempest*, act ii. sc. 1.

	Masculine and Feminine.	Neuter.
Nom.	hwā,	hwæt,
Gen.	hwæs,	hwæs,
Dat.	hwām,	hwām,
Acc.	hwone.	hwæt,
Inst.		hwȳ.

In general it can be said that this pronoun has had the same history essentially as the personal pronouns, especially the pronoun of the third person. In the Early English period the dative *hwām*, 'whom,' supplanted the accusative *hwone* in the masculine, as *him* did *hine*. As *him* gradually became confined to this gender, and the accusative *hit* or *it* took its place in the neuter, so *whom* came, even earlier, to be used only of persons, and the accusative *what* was confined to inquiries about objects without life. Again, just as *his* lost its original neuter sense, and was replaced by *its*, so *whose* has been limited to persons. Questions in regard to things are no longer introduced by *whose*, but instead by *what* or *which* with the preposition *of*.

135. So, also, in the sixteenth century, the same confounding of the nominative and objective cases that occurred with the personal pronouns occurred also with this interrogative. *Whom* is sometimes used where strict grammar requires *who;* but far more frequently was *who* used where *whom* would be the form expected. This usage becomes first conspicuous in the dramatic writings of the Elizabethan

period. In them sentences such as these constantly occur: —

Who have we here? — PEELE, *Edward I.*

Who do you take me to be? — GREENE, *George a-Greene.*

I see *who* he laughed at. — JONSON, *Every Man in his Humor.*

The frequency with which they are put into the mouths of speakers of every social grade furnishes clear proof that they were not felt to be improper. But the usage of *who* for *whom* is far from having been limited to this period. It may be said to have characterized the colloquial speech of England from the latter half of the sixteenth century to the present time, if the language of conversation has been justly represented in the literature which purports to reproduce it. So widespread and persistent is this usage, in fact, that such a strictly correct sentence, for instance, as "Whom did you go to see?" is regarded by many educated men as being of the nature of a pedantic deviation from the normal method of expression, and as representing the artificial speech of grammarians, rather than the natural speech of real life.

136. *Hwilc* was represented in the dialects and sub-dialects of Early English by various forms, among which are *whulc*, *wulch*, *wuch*, *wich*, *quilk*, *whiik*, and *which*. Some of them have been made somewhat familiar by their occurrence in the Scotch dialect. As early as the Middle English period, however, *which* had become established in the language of literature,

and has ever since remained the standard form. Like its correlative, *swilc*, which became *such* (101), it is a compound of *lic*, 'like,' and was originally inflected according to the indefinite declension of the adjective. The history of its forms is consequently included in the history of that part of speech.

137. A similar statement can be made of the interrogative *hwæðer*, 'which of two,' which was originally inflected like the indefinite adjective. The dual sense of this word began to fail even in the Anglo-Saxon period. In consequence it was sometimes strengthened by the numeral, as in Matthew, chapter xxi., verse 31, where, in the Anglo-Saxon version, we read: —

Hwæðer þāra twēgra dyde þæs fæder willan?

This, in the sixteenth century translation now used by us, has the same construction: "Whether of them twain did the will of his father?" The use of *whether* as an interrogative pronoun was never very common, at least after the fourteenth century. It occasionally made its appearance, indeed, down to the end of the sixteenth, as, for example: —

To whether didst thou yield? — *Spanish Tragedy*, act i.

Its place was taken by *which*. The corresponding interrogative adverb *whether* also ceased to be used in direct questions,[1] though in indirect ones it is regularly employed.

[1] *E.g.* Whether am I not betere to thee than ten sones? — *I Samuel* i. 8 (Wycliffite version).

138. An interrogative pronoun, signifying "who of many," existed in the primitive Teutonic, and was transmitted to the Gothic and the Old Norse, but was not preserved in the High German or in any dialect of the Low Germanic group. Compound forms of the interrogatives have been in use during every period of English; but the inflection of the simple forms has not been in the least modified by this fact. In conclusion, it is to be remarked that the instrumental case *hwȳ* has given to the tongue the two interrogative adverbs *how* and *why*.

The Relative Pronouns.

139. The Teutonic did not possess a relative in the strict sense of the word; and, for the representation of it, the English, during every period of its history, has been obliged to have recourse to other pronouns. In Anglo-Saxon the duty of the relative was performed by the following words or phrases: —

1. By the demonstrative pronoun *sē, sēo, þæt*.

2. By *þe* the collateral form of the demonstrative *sē*. As this was indeclinable, it could be employed for an antecedent of any gender, number, or person.

3. By the joining of the indeclinable *þe* to the forms of the demonstrative, giving, for example, in the nominative singular, *sē þe, sēo þe, þæt þe*, or *þætte*.

4. By the joining of *þe* to the personal pronouns, frequently with words intervening.

140. After the Conquest the use of *þe* was the first

to be given up, — a result which was unavoidably hastened by the disposition to employ that form exclusively for the definite article. Still it was used occasionally as late as the beginning of the thirteenth century. All the forms of the demonstrative *sē, sēo, þæt,* were maintained as relatives down to the end of the twelfth century with varying degrees of vitality. The one that was most in use, however, was the neuter nominative and accusative singular *þæt.* This speedily took the place of the old indeclinable *þe* as the representative of all persons, genders, numbers, and cases. By the beginning of the thirteenth century the use of *that* as a general relative, referring both to persons and things, was widely established; by the middle of the same century it had become universal. Such it has remained through every subsequent period of English. Other words have taken their place alongside of it; but there has never been a time since the twelfth century when it has not been in constant employment as a relative.

141. With this form alone, however, the language was not content. At an early period it began to resort to the interrogative pronouns for additional relatives. The first of these that came into general use was *which.* The employment of this interrogative as a relative goes back to the beginning of the thirteenth century, and by the end of the fourteenth it was thoroughly established. It was sometimes preceded by the definite article, giving us the expression *the which.* This was not uncommon in Early English,

but it is now archaic, and rarely found except in the language of poetry. Still more frequently, perhaps, was *which* followed by *that*. The tendency to use the simple form alone constantly grew stronger, however, and after the fourteenth century it became the general practice. From this century till the seventeenth it was regularly employed in reference to persons as well as to things. This idiom has been made familiar to all by the phrase "Our Father *which* art in heaven," occurring in the Lord's Prayer. In the seventeenth century the tendency manifested itself, with the increasing use of *who* as a relative, to confine the reference of *which* solely to things. This may be said to have now become established. But in many kinds of expression usage is still very uncertain, and no hard and fast rules can be laid down about the employment of this relative which will be sanctioned by the uniform practice of the best writers.

142. At an early period, *whose*, and *whom*, the oblique cases of the interrogative *who*, were also used as relatives. This practice may be said to have originated about the beginning of the thirteenth century, and to have steadily increased in use from that time. Sometimes, though rarely, these words, like *which*, were preceded by *the*.[1] The use of the nominative *who* as a relative was later. It was not till the early

[1] Desyryng evere more
To knowen fully, if it youre wille were,
How ye han ferd and don whyl ye be there:
The whos welfare and hele ek God encresse.
CHAUCER, *Troilus and Cryseyde*, v. 1356–1359.

part of the sixteenth century that its employment in this way was established, though occasional instances of such usage occur previously. Nor was *who*, even during the sixteenth century, common as a relative, though constantly becoming more so; but in the seventeenth century it came into general use.

143. At the outset *who* as a relative was not absolutely limited to persons: it occasionally, though not frequently, referred to objects without life. From the latter, however, it was shut out by the distinction that gradually developed itself between it and *which*, in accordance wherewith the former was confined to personal and the latter to impersonal antecedents. In this matter the objective *whom* has the same history as the nominative *who*. On the other hand, the genitive *whose* as a relative, has, during all the periods of English, been applied equally to persons and to things. In the latter usage it is etymologically the genitive, not of *who*, but of *what* (134); and in sense it corresponds both to 'of whom' and to 'of which.' The grammatical rule sometimes laid down that requires its antecedent to be a person is neither based upon the etymology of the word, nor what in this matter is of more importance, the usage of the best writers and speakers.

144. It will be seen from the foregoing account that the oldest of our existing relatives is *that*, and *who* the youngest; and furthermore, that the marked distinction between the use of *who* and *which* is later than the sixteenth century. Yet how completely all

knowledge of these facts had been lost by the beginning of the eighteenth century is clearly shown by one of the essays in the *Spectator*. In No. 78 of that periodical, which appeared on May 30, 1711, Steele, the author, appended "the humble petition of WHO and WHICH." In it, among other things, the petitioners are represented as making the following statements: —

> We are descended of ancient families, and kept up our dignity and honor many years, till the jack-sprat THAT supplanted us. How often have we found ourselves slighted by the clergy in their pulpits and the lawyers at the bar. Nay, how often have we heard in one of the most polite and august assemblies in the universe, to our great mortification, these words, "That that that noble lord urged"; which if one of us had had justice done, would have sounded nobler thus, "That which that noble lord urged." Senates themselves, the guardians of British liberty, have degraded us and preferred *that* to us; and yet no decree was ever given against us. In the very acts of parliament, in which the utmost right should be done to every body, word and thing, we find ourselves often either not used, or used one instead of another. In the first and best prayer children are taught, they learn to misuse us. "Our Father *which* art in heaven" should be "Our Father *who* art in heaven"; and even a convocation, after long debates, refused to consent to an alteration of it. In our general confession we say, "Spare thou them, O God, which confess their faults," which ought to be "who confess their faults." What hopes then have we of having justice done us, when the makers of our very prayers and laws, and the most learned in all faculties, seem to be in a confederacy against us, and our enemies themselves must be our judges?

145. The confusion between the nominative and objective of the interrogative *who* naturally extended

itself to the word when used as a relative. In one instance the confusion has perpetuated itself to our own time, and has become established in usage. This is in the phrase *than whom*, which has been both common and classical from the latter half of the sixteenth century. Modern grammarians, in this case, are often disposed in consequence to treat *than*, not as a conjunction, but as a preposition. There is reason to suppose that the general perpetuation, if not the creation of this particular idiom, was largely influenced by the two constructions in Latin of the comparative with *quam*, and with the ablative.

146. One relative construction lasted down to the beginning of the Middle English period, and then died out, except in the language of low life. This is the fourth one mentioned, as found in Anglo-Saxon, in which the demonstrative *sē, sēo, þæt* was united with a personal pronoun. This continued to survive in a modified form. The demonstrative *that* was joined with the pronouns of the third person, usually with a number of words intervening, to form the relative. Accordingly *that — he* was equivalent to *who; that — his* and *that — her* to *whose; that — him* and *that — hem* to *whom* or *which*. This relative construction is found sometimes in Chaucer, and may be illustrated by the following examples: —

> A Knight there was and that a worthy man,
> *That* fro the tyme that he first began
> To ryden out, *he* loved chivalrye.
>
> Prologue to *Canterbury Tales*, lines 43–45.

Now fele I wel the goodnesse of this wyf,
That bothe after her deeth and in her lyf,
Her grete bountee doubleth her renoun.
Legend of Good Women, lines 522–524.

Wel the hotter ben the gledis[1] rede,
That men *hem* wren[2] with asshen pale and dede.
Troilus and Cryseyde, ii. 539.

In the modern language of low life in which this idiom is preserved, *which* takes the place of *that*.[3]

147. The indefinite pronouns, as has been stated, had, in general, either the inflection of the noun or of the adjective, usually the latter. The words so entitled, which existed in Anglo-Saxon, excluding the compound forms, have been transmitted to Modern English, with two exceptions. These are the indeclinable *fela*, 'many,' and *man*, 'one.' The former, in Early English, passed into the form *felc;* the latter, into *men*, or, with the *-n* dropped, into *me*. Both died out in the fifteenth century. *Hwā*, 'some one,' was in Anglo-Saxon also used as an indefinite pronoun, and lasted down to the seventeenth century in certain phrases, such as, "as *who* should say," which, indeed, in poetry, are not yet entirely obsolete. Another indefinite pronoun, *ān*, 'a certain,' was also the numeral 'one,' and, even during the Anglo-Saxon period, had sometimes the force merely of the indefinite article. Its confinement

[1] Live coals. [2] Cover.

[3] See for illustration the following extract from Pepys's Diary, under date of Aug. 20, 1663: "At noon dined at home, and there found a little girle which she told my wife her name was Jinny, by which name we shall call her."

to this usage became more thoroughly established after the Norman Conquest; and in Early English the custom arose of dropping the final *-n* before words beginning with a consonant or consonant sound, and of retaining it before words beginning with a vowel or a silent *h*. This practice, with slight exceptions, has been followed to the present day.

CHAPTER V.

THE VERB.

THE TEUTONIC VERB. GENERAL STATEMENTS.

148. The inflection of the verb was at one time the most perplexing problem that presented itself to the student of the English language. In no other part of speech did lawlessness apparently run more riot; and about the reason for this condition of things absolute ignorance prevailed. The obscurity enveloping the subject was admitted by the early grammarians, who recognized the existence of difficulties they could neither explain nor remove. Ben Jonson (1573?–1637), as great a scholar as he was a poet, left behind him a grammar of our tongue, in which he confessed his inability to bring order out of this apparent chaos. "We have set down," he wrote, "that that in our judgment agreeth best with reason and good order. Which notwithstanding, if it seem to any to be too rough hewed, let him plane it out more smoothly, and I shall not only not envy it, but in the behalf of my country, most heartily thank him for so great a benefit; hoping that I shall be thought

sufficiently to have done my part, if in tolling this bell I may draw others to a deeper consideration of the matter; for, touching myself, I must needs confess that after much painful churning, this only would come, which here we have devised."

149. It was not, indeed, till the present century that the comparative study which was made of the early Teutonic tongues enabled scholars to set forth the exact lines of demarcation that exist between the two leading conjugations of the English verb. It was only through this study that the origin could be discovered of the many real and apparent anomalies that are still found in this part of speech. The difficulties that once beset the subject have now been almost entirely cleared away. Yet how little the results of these scientific investigations have been diffused is made apparent from the fact that the majority of English grammars in use continue to repeat without hesitation the errors of the past, and retain still the inaccurate classification which confounds the regular verbs of one conjugation with the irregular verbs of the other. To make clear the origin of the peculiarities of this part of speech and the present condition of the individual members belonging to it, will be the object of the following pages.

150. To all the Teutonic languages the following parts of the verb were common from the earliest period of their history: —

1. Two leading conjugations.
2. One voice, — the active.

3. Three finite modes. These are the indicative, the subjunctive, — sometimes called the conjunctive, and corresponding to the Greek optative, — and the imperative.

4. An infinitive, and an active and a passive participle.

5. Two simple tenses, — the present and the preterite.

6. Two numbers, — the singular and the plural.

7. Three persons, — the first, second, and third.

Besides these forms common to all, the Gothic retained a middle voice which was used generally in a passive sense, and a dual number which was confined to the first and second persons. The primitive method of forming the preterite by reduplication (16) it likewise preserved in some forty verbs; but of this traces only can be found in the other Teutonic languages (17).

151. Excluding the Gothic, the Teutonic has accordingly lost, of the parts belonging to the primitive Indo-European verb, the middle voice (also used as a passive), the mode corresponding to the Greek subjunctive, the imperfect, aorist, and future tenses, and the dual number.

152. According to its method of forming the preterite, the Teutonic verb is divided into two great conjugations. One is called either the Old, or the Strong conjugation; the other, the New, or the Weak conjugation. The distinguishing difference in their inflection lies in the addition or in the non-addition

of a syllable to the root to form the preterite. This additional syllable, in some modern Teutonic tongues, noticeably in English, has been, in many cases, cut down to a single letter. Examples of this conjugation are words like *kill, kill-ed; love, love-d; think, though-t.*

153. The addition of a syllable was the particular characteristic of the weak conjugation. On the other hand, verbs of the strong conjugation add nothing to form the preterite. Thus, in Anglo-Saxon, *singan* meant 'to sing': the present tense, first person singular, was *sing-e;* the preterite of the same person was *sang.* No syllable was added, as in the case of *kill* and *love.* But to this conjugation belongs a variation of the radical vowel, which, in the instance just cited, is exemplified by the change of *i* to *a.* This is, indeed, one of its most marked features, and one which has been preserved in its whole subsequent history. But as variation of the vowel, though not due to the same cause, is found in a few verbs of the conjugation which added a syllable to form the preterite, this variation cannot be regarded as a distinctive peculiarity. Thus, the present *sell-e* of the Anglo-Saxon weak verb *sell-an* has for its preterite *seal-de,* the *e* of the one tense giving place to *ea* in the other; and Modern English still retains this peculiarity in the present *sell* and the preterite *sol-d.* Accordingly, it is the adding, or not adding, of a syllable, which is the original fundamental distinction between the two conjugations, and not the variation of vowel.

154. The term Old is employed because the verbs belonging to the conjugation so-called are mainly the primitive verbs of the Teutonic. It is from them, or from nouns, that the verbs of the New conjugation with a few exceptions have been derived, and their name corresponds to their origin. The terms Strong and Weak were first applied by Grimm, on the theory that verbs of the one conjugation expressed the idea of past time by a mere modification of their own resources, that is, by changing the radical vowel; while those of the other had to call in the help of an additional syllable to achieve the same result. Though this terminology is somewhat fanciful, it is convenient, and has come into general use, and in this treatise will be ordinarily employed. The terms Regular and Irregular, as commonly employed in English grammars, are scientifically incorrect, because they blend in one class the strong verbs and the anomalous verbs of the weak conjugation.

155. The syllable which is added to form the preterite of verbs of the weak conjugation is supposed, according to the generally received theory, to be the reduplicated perfect of a verb corresponding to the English verb *do*. In Anglo-Saxon the infinitive of this was *dōn*, and its preterite, *dide*, the modern *did:* in Old High German the corresponding forms were *tuon* and *teta*. The reduplicated form of this verb is not preserved in its complete state in the preterites of any of the weak verbs in the Teutonic languages, except in Gothic; and there it is not found in the

singular, but is found in the dual and plural. For illustration, the first person plural of the preterite of the Gothic verb *haban*, 'to have,' is *habai-dēdum*, which is strictly *have-did-we*, equivalent to *we did have*.

156. One further distinction also exists between the strong and the weak conjugation. This is in the passive participle. In the former, the suffix was *-an*, usually weakened into *-en*, as seen still in *driv-en*, *gott-en*; for the latter it was *-d* or *-t*, as seen in *love-d*, *brough-t*.

157. These are characteristics which English shares with all the other Teutonic languages. In the Anglo-Saxon the two conjugations above described, with all their distinctive peculiarities, were flourishing, and they have lasted down to the present time. But in the course of their history great changes have taken place in their relative size and importance. The most obvious and the most important fact is, that verbs of the strong conjugation have in Modern English become so few, and verbs of the weak conjugation so numerous, that the former, when compared with the latter, are apt to seem like exceptions to the general rule.

158. The specific changes that have come over the two conjugations may be classified under the following heads: —

1. Many strong verbs have disappeared altogether.
2. Many strong verbs have passed over to the weak conjugation.

3. A few weak verbs have passed over to the strong conjugation.

4. A few verbs have a double set of forms — one belonging to the strong conjugation, and one to the weak.

5. A few verbs have forms for different parts from both conjugations, a preterite, for example, being formed according to the one and a past participle according to the other. The details of all these changes will be given in the history of the losses and gains of the two conjugations.

CONFLICT OF THE STRONG AND WEAK CONJUGATIONS.

159. In the English of the Anglo-Saxon period the strong conjugation was divided into a number of subordinate conjugations, the distinctions between which will be given later. The diminution in the number of verbs belonging to the strong conjugation — either by the loss to the language of the verbs themselves, or by their transition to the weak conjugation — is the matter of most essential importance, bringing to light, as it does, the origin of the anomalies that are to be found in the existing inflection of the verb in our tongue.

160. In the Anglo-Saxon there were about three hundred simple verbs of the strong conjugation; in Modern English there are less than one hundred. The original number has accordingly suffered a diminution of more than two-thirds. But even this gives no adequate conception of the loss. As the number of formative prefixes was far larger in Anglo-Saxon than in

Modern English,[1] the number of compound verbs created by the addition of these prefixes to the simple verb was necessarily much larger. Thus, in Anglo-Saxon more than a dozen new verbs were formed by the addition of different prefixes to *standan*. Of these, Modern English has retained in common use only *with* and *under;* so that, from this same verb, we now form but two verbs, *withstand* and *understand*, instead of the original dozen or more. The disproportion between the earlier and the later form of the language, in respect to the number of strong verbs, is consequently much greater than would be implied by a loss of two-thirds.

161. The causes of this loss are not hard to find. Even during the Anglo-Saxon period all verbs derived from nouns or other verbs were inflected according to the weak conjugation. Such was the case also with the few foreign verbs that were from time to time introduced. On the other hand, the strong conjugation received no accessions. Under any circumstances, therefore, the number of weak verbs would be constantly increasing; while the strong, by simply remaining the same, would become a proportionally smaller fraction of the whole. It was an inevitable result of this, that the tendency would manifest itself at some time to inflect all verbs in the way that the majority of them were inflected. There is evidence that this was beginning to exert some influence in the language as it is found written before the Norman Conquest.

[1] See page 107.

Many of the strong verbs have weak derivative verbs with precisely the same meaning alongside of them. In some cases also a weak derivative verb exists as the representative of a strong verb that had gone out of use in Anglo-Saxon, but has been preserved in other early Teutonic tongues.

162. Two special agencies now came in to hasten the change in the relative numbers of the two conjugations, and to widen vastly the disproportion already beginning to exist. The Norman Conquest made French the language of the cultivated classes, and left the native tongue to be used exclusively by the more uneducated portion of the community. The conservative influence of the literary language was in consequence no longer felt. As a result, confusion speedily sprang up between the two conjugations in the speech of ignorant men. In process of time, it became established by custom in the speech of all. The tendency to bring about uniformity at any cost [1] made itself powerfully felt in causing the inflection of verbs belonging to the smaller class to conform to that of the larger. This, as we have just seen, had been manifested in Anglo-Saxon, but after the Conquest its influence went on for a long while in a constantly increasing ratio. Hence men learned to say, for example, *glided* for *glod*, *melted* for *molt*, *carved* for *carf*. The influence extended to verbs which still retain their strong inflections: and even in the language of the fourteenth century we can find *growed* for *grew*, *rised* for *rose*,

[1] See pages 145–147.

smited for *smote*,[1] and a number of other now unused weak preterites.

163. This agency, of itself, even if not affected by other influences, would have largely reduced the number of strong verbs. But great as it was, it was not to be compared with the effect produced by the influx of foreign words from the French, which, beginning toward the end of the thirteenth century, culminated in revolutionizing the vocabulary in the century following. All the new verbs taken from that language were inflected according to the weak conjugation; and with their introduction dropped out of use a large number of Anglo-Saxon verbs. Many of these latter belonged to the strong conjugation, and their loss to it could never be replaced. The consequence was, that, at the beginning of the Middle English period, the whole number of strong verbs in the language had become comparatively small. Not only was this true, but it seemed as if, under the influence of the tendency to uniformity, they were about to disappear altogether.

164. The transition of verbs of the strong conjugation to that of the weak was arrested, however, as soon as the influence of literary models — the great con-

[1] In his garden *growed* swich a tree.
CHAUCER, Prol. to *Wife of Bath's Tale*, line 759.

Thei *ryseden* eerly and worschipeden before the Lord.
I Samuel i. 19 (Purvey's Recension).

These ben the goddis that *smytiden* Egipt with al veniaunce in deseert. *I Samuel* iv. 8 (Purvey's Recension).

servative agency in speech — began to make itself widely felt. The movement in that direction, which had been going on steadily since the Norman Conquest, received its first check in the latter half of the fourteenth century with the rise of a native literature of a high order. From that time the tendency of the strong verbs to go over to the weak conjugation became less and less conspicuous. At the end of the Middle English period it had ceased entirely. On the other hand, there has been manifested during all periods, a tendency on the part of a number of weak verbs to assume strong forms — a tendency which, in the case of certain of them, has resulted in their partial or complete transfer to the strong conjugation.

165. The history of the English verb is, therefore, from one point of view, the history of a conflict between the weak and the strong conjugation, in which the former steadily tended for three centuries to become the one exclusively in use. The arrest of the movement in this direction, which overtook the verb in the fourteenth century, was the main cause that all our verbs are not now inflected according to the weak conjugation. Still it was inevitable that the action and reaction of the two conjugations upon each other, and the stoppage of the transition that had been going on from the strong to the weak inflection, should cause many apparently anomalous and irregular forms to appear in the language. Accordingly, a satisfactory account of the later history of the strong conjugation has been made a task of no slight difficulty, in conse-

quence of the irregularities that exist in many verbs, and the seemingly capricious changes that have taken place in their inflections at various periods. In some of them there has been only a partial transfer. They have retained strong forms in equal authority with the weak, or even in greater. They have retained strong forms in poetry, while dropping them in prose; or they have retained simply either a strong participial form, or a strong preterite form. These variations will be all exhibited and explained in the consideration of the two conjugations that follows.

The Strong Conjugation.

166. The variations and modifications that took place within the strong conjugation naturally involve the discussion of its preterites and past participles, not as distinguished from those of the weak conjugation, but as distinguished from each other. The Anglo-Saxon strong verbs may be divided into seven classes, the first six of which include all the verbs that exhibit vowel-change proper; the seventh all that originally formed the preterite by reduplication (16). Under each of these classes will be given those verbs belonging to it in Anglo-Saxon which have been preserved with their strong inflections in Modern English. The principal parts given are, 1, the infinitive; 2 and 3, the preterite singular (excluding the second person) and the preterite plural; 4, the passive participle. Modern English forms are placed under the Anglo-Saxon.

STRONG VERBS. — CLASS I.

167. In the verbs of this class the variation of the radical vowel took place in the following order in Anglo-Saxon: —

ī; ā, i; i.

There were over fifty verbs belonging to the class in the early speech. Of this number the following are still inflected according to the strong conjugation: —

1. (a)bide,	bīdan;	bād,	bidon;	biden.
	-bide	*-bode*		*-bode, -bided*
2. bite,	bītan;	bāt,	biton;	biten.
	bite	*bit*		*bitten, bit*
3. cleave ('to adhere'),	clīfan;	clāf,	clifon;	clifen.
	cleave	*clave*		*cleaved*
4. drive,	drīfan;	drāf,	drifon;	drifen.
	drive	*drove*		*driven*
5. ride,	rīdan;	rād,	ridon;	riden.
	ride	*rode*	*rid*	*ridden, rid*
6. rise,	rīsan;	rās,	rison;	risen.
	rise	*rose*		*risen*
7. shine,	scīnan;	scān,	scinon;	scinen(?)
	shine	*shone*		*shone*
8. shrive,	scrīfan;	scrāf,	scrifon;	scrifen.
	shrive	*shrove*		*shriven*
9. slide,	slīdan;	slād,	slidon;	sliden.
	slide	*slid*		*slidden, slid*
10. smite,	smītan;	smāt,	smiton;	smiten.
	smite	*smote*		*smitten*
11. stride,	strīdan;	strād,	stridon;	striden.
	stride	*strode*		*stridden*

12. strike,	strīcan;	strāc,	stricon;	stricen.
	strike	*struck*		*struck, stricken*
13. write,	wrītan;	wrāt,	writon;	writen.
	write	*wrote*	*writ*	*written*

168. In the Modern English forms the variation of the radical vowel follows generally the following order: —

ī; o *or* i; i.

Two forms of the preterite — one with the vowel *o* representing the original preterite singular, the other with the vowel *i* of the preterite plural and past participle — have been more or less in use, side by side, since the beginning of the Middle English period. In general, however, there has been a preference for the forms containing *o*, so much so that many of those containing *i* now seem vulgar. Still, Ben Jonson in his "English Grammar" gives to the verbs *bide, drive, rise, smite,* and *stride* the preterites *bĭd, drĭv, rĭs, smĭt,* and *strĭd,* as well as the forms now in use. On the other hand, he gave to *slide* the preterite *slod* as well as *slĭd.* Furthermore, *bot* or *bote* was in use up to the seventeenth century as a preterite of *bite.*

169. *Strike* should be regularly inflected in Modern English as *stroke* and *striken,* and these forms it has had, among others, during its history. But in the sixteenth century, perhaps under the influence of verbs of Class III. (190), its preterite became *struck.* This form also made its way into the past participle, and there further developed the form *strucken,* occa-

sionally used. The original verb *strīcan* did not have its present sense in the early speech, but meant 'to go,' 'to advance.' This signification is still found in the phrase "stricken in years," in which the original participle continues to be used.

170. Four verbs of the foregoing list have also developed weak forms alongside the strong ones. They are the following: —

Infinitive.	Preterite.	Past Participle.
-bide,	-bided,	-bided.
cleave,	cleaved,	cleaved.
shine,	shined,	shined.
shrive,	shrived,	shrived.

171. *Bide* exists in Modern English mainly in the compound *abide*. As a simple verb, it is little used outside of poetry, and is then regularly inflected according to the weak conjugation. The compound *abide*, however, prefers the strong conjugation, though the vowel of the preterite has made its way into the past participle, and *abode* — earlier *aboden* — is the common form for the now archaic *abidden*. This last form, too, occasionally dropped its final syllable and appeared as *abid*.

172. *Cleave* is now more generally inflected according to the weak conjugation, and its original may, perhaps, be properly considered the weak Anglo-Saxon verb *clīfian*, rather than the strong *clīfan*. Still the point is hard, and perhaps impossible to determine with certainty, from the fact that during the whole of

its history its forms have been constantly confused with those of the verb *cleave*, 'to split,' of Class II. (180). If from the strong verb *clīfan*, we should expect *clove* as the preterite, and such it was occasionally in Early English. The more common form of the two, however, was *clave*, which has been kept alive by its frequent occurrence in our version of the Bible.

173. As early as the sixteenth century — perhaps much earlier — *shine* developed the weak preterite and past participle *shined*. It is very common during the first part of the Modern English period, and is still occasionally met with in literature. In the modern language, *shone*, however, is the much more usual form. The past participle *shinen* has hardly ever had a recognized existence, and its place is now taken by the preterite. Apparently at about the same time as *shine*, the verb *shrive* assumed also the inflections of the weak conjugation. From the sixteenth century, certainly, *shrived* has been fully as common as *shrove* and *shriven*, and perhaps more common.

174. In addition to the thirteen verbs of this class that have come down from the Anglo-Saxon period, the following four have been added to it since that time: —

	Infinitive.	Preterite.	Past Participle.
14.	chide,	chid,	chidden.
15.	hide,	hid,	hidden.
16.	strive,	strove,	striven.
17.	thrive,	throve,	thriven.

175. The first two of these come from the Anglo-Saxon weak verbs: —

cīdan,	cīdde,	cīded, cīdd.
hȳdan,	hȳdde,	hȳded, hȳdd.

With the inflection *chide, chid; hide, hid,* these two verbs could be properly included among the irregular verbs of the weak conjugation, which shorten the vowel of the present in the preterite (284). But early in the sixteenth century, and probably somewhat before, both had created a new past participle by adding to the contracted preterite the termination *-en,* giving for that part of the verb the forms *chidden* and *hidden,* as well as *chid* and *hid.* This properly brings them under this class of strong verbs. *Chide,* after the analogy of *ride* and *stride,* formed also a preterite *chode,* perhaps even at an earlier date than the participle *chidden;* but it has not maintained itself as has the latter. The modern language has developed the full weak preterite form *chided* along with *chid.*

176. *Strive* and *thrive* — the first from the Old French, the second from the Old Norse — came into the language during the Old English period. Accordingly, we should have expected them to be inflected according to the weak conjugation. But from the very outset *strive,* probably after the analogy of *drive,* developed strong forms alongside of the weak ones. From the thirteenth century to the present time the strong and weak preterites *strove* and *strived* can be found side by side, as likewise the passive participles

striven and *strived.* The language at present prefers the strong forms. Essentially the same thing may be said of *thrive,* in which, however, the strong forms seem to be the earlier; at least they were more in use.

177. Of the verbs originally belonging to this class the following have gone over to the weak conjugation: —

1. glide (*glīdan*).
2. gripe (*grīpan*).
3. sigh (*sīcan*).
4. slip? (*slīpan*).
5. slit? (*slītan*).
6. sneak (*snīcan*).
7. spew (*spīwan*).
8. twit (*æt-wītan*).
9. { writhe / wreathe } (*wrīðan*).

Here also it may be proper to include the two following words, which lasted down to the beginning of Modern English: —

flite,	from *flītan,* 'to scold.'
sty,	from *stīgan,* 'to ascend.'

178. To the list of verbs which once belonged to this class is to be added *rive.* This came into the language from the Old Norse, and exhibited in Early English the following inflection: —

Infinitive.	Preterite Singular.	Preterite Plural.	Past Participle.
rive(n),	rof,	riven,	riven.

Before the beginning of the Modern English period, the verb had gone over to the weak conjugation, leaving behind it, however, in good use, the strong past participle *riven.*

179. *Wreathe* seems to be nothing but a variant of *writhe*, but it was perhaps derived directly from the substantive *wreath*. The strong past participle *writhen* is archaic, and the corresponding *wreathen* belongs to the language of poetry. *Twit*, as is seen, is a compound, of which the final letter of the prefix has been retained with the verb. The simple verb *wītan*, 'to blame,' 'to find fault with,' which entered into the compound, did not die out till the Middle English period.

STRONG VERBS. — CLASS II.

180. In the Anglo-Saxon verbs of this class, the variation of the radical vowel was as follows: —

ēo ū	; ēa,	u;	o.

There were more than fifty of these verbs in Anglo-Saxon, of which only the following survive: —

1. choose,	cēosan;	cēas, curon;	coren.
	choose	*chose*	*chosen*
2. cleave ('to split'),	clēofan;	clēaf, clufon;	clofen.
	cleave	*clove*	*cloven*
3. fly,	flēogan;	flēah, flugon;	flogen.
	fly	*flew*	*flown*
4. freeze,	frēosan;	frēas fruron;	froren.
	freeze	*froze*	*frozen*
5. seethe,	sēoðan;	sēað, sudon;	soden.
	seethe	*sod*	*sodden*
6. shoot,	scēotan;	scēat scuton;	scoten.
	shoot	*shot*	*shot.*

181. A very marked peculiarity in the history of this class is the extent of the variation which the forms have undergone. The modern ones, in consequence, can hardly be said in most cases to be derived from the ones found in Anglo-Saxon. The following most important of these variations will be noted: —

182. (1) The change of *s* to *r* (14). This took place in certain forms of the original verb, but has now been abandoned. In consequence, *coren* has been replaced by *chosen*, and *froren* by *frozen*. *Froren* or *frore* is still in poetic use, however, as an adjective.[1] The same thing can be said of *lorn* and *forlorn*, originally past participles of *lēosan* and *forlēosan*. *Lēosan*, 'to lose,' a verb of this class, which has gone over to the weak conjugation, was apparently known to Anglo-Saxon only in compounds. In Early English, however, it appears, and frequently presents the following inflection: —

lesen; les, lore(n); lor(e)n.

An Anglo-Saxon weak verb *losian*, *losode*, 'to be lost,' may have had some influence on the modern form, but this is very doubtful.

183. (2) The extent to which the vowel of the past participle made its way into the preterite. The

[1] My hart-blood is wel nigh *frorne*, I feele.
SPENSER, *Shepheards Calender*, February.

The parching air
Burns *frore*, and cold performs the effect of fire.
MILTON, *Paradise Lost*, ii. 595.

Early English preterites *chēs, clēf, frēs, sēth,* and *shēt* have been uniformly given up for forms containing *o*. This tendency began to show itself in the Old English period. The only exception to the universality of this rule is *fly*.

184. (3) The fact that two of these words, *choose* and *shoot*, have replaced, with forms containing *oo*, the regularly descended forms of the infinitive, *chese*(*n*) and *shete*(*n*). A similar statement can be made of the originally strong verb of this class, *lese*(*n*), which has given place to *lose*.

185. In regard to individual words, *cleave*, constantly confounded with *cleave* of Class I. (167), has had likewise the preterite *clave*. It also developed in the Old English period the regular weak form *cleaved*, and in the Middle English the irregular weak form *cleft*. This latter is still very common. *Seethe* has developed also the weak form *seethed*. This apparently did not come into much, if any, use till the Modern English period, but it has now generally taken the place of the strong forms, which seem in consequence somewhat archaic. Still, the word itself is employed comparatively little. The forms of *flēogan*, 'to fly,' were from the outset confused with those of *flēohan*, 'to flee'; and this is doubtless one of the reasons why the principal parts of the former verb have had an exceptional development of their own. It remains to be said that *bēodan*, 'to offer,' of this class, has been confounded with *biddan*, 'to ask,' of Class V., as will be pointed out later (217).

186. The following verbs of this class have gone over to the weak conjugation. The first list contains the words which had originally *ēo* in the infinitive, the second *ū*.

1. brew (*brēowan*).
2. chew (*cēowan*).
3. creep (*crēopan*).
4. crowd (*crēodan*).
5. flee (*flēon*).
6. float, fleet (*flēotan*).
7. lie, 'to deceive' (*lēogan*).
8. lose (*-lēosan*).
9. rue (*hrēowan*).
10. sprout (*sprēotan, sprūtan*).

11. bow (*būgan*).
12. brook (*brūcan*).
13. rout, 'to snore' (*hrūtan*).
14. shove (*scūfan*).
15. suck? (*sūcan*).
16. sup? (*sūpan*).

To these may be added the following dialectic or archaic words, which appear still occasionally in the literary speech: —

dree,	from *drēogan*, 'to suffer.'
lout,	from *lūtan*, 'to bow.'[1]

187. The Anglo-Saxon verb *flēotan* was regularly represented in Middle English by the form *flete*, and the form *flote*, though occurring, does not occur often. The spelling of the Modern English verb may have been affected by the substantive *flota*, 'a vessel,' though this is doubtful. *Creep*, another one of these verbs, has the strong preterite and participle *crope* and *cropen* in occasional use early in the Modern English

[1] For example, the Scotch phrase, *To dree one's weird*, "to endure one's fate." Also

> He faire the knight saluted, *louting* low.
>
> SPENSER, *Faerie Queene*, I. i. 30.

period, and dialectically it continues to exist until this day.

188. Some of the Anglo-Saxon verbs of this class have weak forms alongside of the strong ones, and from either one of these the modern weak verb may have been derived. Thus *reek* may have descended from the strong verb *rēocan*, 'to smoke, exhale,' or from the weak *rēcan*, with the same meaning. One of the strong verbs of this class, *dūfan*, did not perpetuate itself; but the weak collateral verb *dȳfan* survives in the word *dive*. This, in the language of common life, has of late exhibited a tendency to assume in the preterite the form *dove*, after the analogy of *drive* of Class I. From colloquial speech it has naturally now and then made its way into literature, as, for example: —

> Straight into the river Kwasind
> Plunged as if he were an otter,
> *Dove* as if he were a beaver.
> LONGFELLOW, *Hiawatha*, vii. (original edition).

STRONG VERBS. — CLASS III.

189. The verbs in this class fall into three divisions according to the following schemes of vowel-variation: —

1.	i;	a(o),	u;	u.
2.	e;	ea,	u;	o.
3.	eo;	ea,	u;	o.

Besides these there were a few verbs in Anglo-

Saxon which underwent special variations of their own. These are indicated in the following scheme: —

e;	æ,	u;	o.
i;	æ,	u;	u.
u;	ea,	u;	

190. There were between seventy-five and eighty verbs in the whole class. The following twenty-two found in Modern English represent the members of the first subdivision: —

1.	bind,	bindan;	band,	bundon;	bunden.
		bind	*bound*		*bound*
2.	climb,	climban;	clamb,	clumbon;	clumben.
		climb	*clomb*		*clomb*
3.	cling,[1]	clingan;	clang,	clungon;	clungen.
		cling	*clung*		*clung*
4.	drink,	drincan;	dranc,	druncon;	druncen.
		drink	*drank*	*drunk*	*drunk*
5.	find,	findan;	fand,	fundon;	funden.
		find	*found*		*found*
6.	-gin,	-ginnan;	-gan,	-gunnon;	-gunnen.
		-gin	*-gan*	*-gun*	*-gun*
7.	grind,	grindan;	grand,	grundon;	grunden.
		grind	*ground*		*ground*
8.	run,	rinnan;	ran,	runnon;	runnen.
		run	*ran*		*run*
9.	shrink,	scrincan;	scranc,	scruncon;	scruncen.
		shrink	*shrank*	*shrunk*	*shrunk*
10.	sing,	singan;	sang,	sungon;	sungen.
		sing	*sang*	*sung*	*sung*

[1] The Anglo-Saxon *clingan* meant 'to shrink,' and *winnan* 'to labor.'

11.	sink,	sincan;	sanc,	suncon;	suncen.
		sink	*sank*	*sunk*	*sunk*
12.	sling,	slingan;	slang,	slungon;	slungen.
		sling	*slung*		*slung*
13.	slink,	slincan;	slanc,	sluncon;	sluncen.
		slink	*slank*	*slunk*	*slunk*
14.	spin,	spinnan;	span,	spunnon;	spunnen.
		spin	*spun*		*spun*
15.	spring,	springan;	sprang,	sprungon;	sprungen.
		spring	*sprang*	*sprung*	*sprung*
16.	sting,	stingan;	stang,	stungon;	stungen.
		sting	*stung*		*stung*
17.	stink,	stincan;	stanc,	stuncon;	stuncen.
		stink	*stank*	*stunk*	*stunk*
18.	swim,	swimman;	swam,	swummon;	swummen.
		swim	*swam*	*swum*	*swum*
19.	swing,	swingan;	swang,	swungon;	swungen.
		swing	*swung*		*swung*
20.	win,[1]	winnan;	wan,	wunnon;	wunnen.
		win	*won*		*won*
21.	wind,	windan;	wand,	wundon;	wunden.
		wind	*wound*		*wound*
22.	wring,	wringan;	wrang,	wrungon;	wrungen.
		wring	*wrung*		*wrung*

The two following are the sole representatives now existing of the second and third subdivisions: —

23.	help,	helpan;	healp,	hulpon;	holpen.
		help	*holp*		*holpen*
24.	fight,	feohtan;	feaht,	fuhton;	fohten.
		fight	*fought*		*fought*

[1] See note, preceding page.

191. In Modern English the variation of the radical vowel has generally been according to the following scheme: —

i; a *or* u; u.

But besides the cases of individual verbs to be considered separately, those which ended in *-nd* — *bind, find, grind,* and *wind* — have invariably lengthened in the literary language the short vowel of the preterite and past participle into the diphthong *ou*. These same verbs have likewise lengthened the vowel of the infinitive and the present tense, which is long only by position, into the diphthongal sound of *i*, as has also *climb*.

192. This class of strong verbs received during the Old English period the two verbs now inflected as follows: —

25.	fling;	flung;	flung.
26.	ring;	rang *or* rung;	rung.

193. *Fling* is a word that came into our tongue from the Norse. Since its introduction it has never been inflected otherwise than according to the strong conjugation. In Early English it had also the preterite *flang*. *Ring* is from the weak Anglo-Saxon verb *hringan, hringde*. Like *fling*, it doubtless assumed the strong inflection after the analogy of *sing, spring*, and similar words. It does not appear to have shown weak forms after the Anglo-Saxon period.

194. During the Modern English period strong inflections have been developed by three verbs, which

may be assigned most appropriately to this class. They are the following: —

27.	dig;	dug;	dug.
28.	stick;	stuck;	stuck.
29.	string;	strung;	strung.

195. Of these words *dig* is of somewhat uncertain origin, though the derivation can perhaps be ascribed reasonably, if remotely, to Anglo-Saxon *dīcian*, *dīcode*, 'to make a dike, mound, or ditch.' In the form in which it now appears it does not seem, however, to have been used before the fourteenth century. It had then, and for several centuries following, the weak preterite and past participle *digged*. The strong form, *dug*, did not become common, if, indeed, it was known at all, until the eighteenth century. It cannot be found in the authorized version of the Bible, in Shakspeare, or in the poetry of Milton. In all of these the preterite was *digged*. This latter form has now become archaic.

196. *Stick* is derived directly from the weak Anglo-Saxon verb *stician*, *sticode*, having the meaning of 'to adhere.' The form *stiked* for the preterite and past participle is common in the literary language of the fourteenth century; but, in the sixteenth, *stuck* had become instead the regular form. The transition doubtless took place during the Middle English period. There was an Early English strong verb, *steken*, 'to pierce,' which has also a right to be considered as one of the originals of this verb. It was inflected as follows: —

steke(n); stak, stok; steken, stoken.

This, which would strictly belong to Class V., had no original in Anglo-Saxon.

197. *String* is a verb that has apparently been formed from the noun 'string,' in Anglo-Saxon, *streng*. It does not appear to have been known before the sixteenth century, though it would be venturesome to assert that it had not a much earlier existence. If the verb is recent, as seems most probable, it is likely that from the beginning of its formation it was inflected *string, strung, strung*, according to the strong conjugation, after the analogy of *swing, swung; sting, stung;* and others.

198. Of the verbs in the foregoing list, two — *climb* and *help* — have regularly gone over to the weak conjugation, and form the preterites and past participles *climbed* and *helped*. Their strong forms are either archaic, poetic, or dialectic. The transition took place during the Middle English period. What, on the whole, were the common early strong forms for *climb* were as follows: —

climbe(n); clamb, clombe(n); clumben.

These are responsible for several of the forms still in use in dialects and among the uneducated.

199. *Ding*, a word but now little used, was not known to Anglo-Saxon at all, but in Early English appeared with the following inflection: —

dinge(n); dang, dungen; dungen.

It now follows usually the weak conjugation, but also exhibits the strong preterite and past participle *dung*.

200. The Early English inflection of *run* was as follows: —

rinne(n) } ; ran } , runnen } ; runnen }
renne(n) } ron } ronnen } ronnen } .

In the case of this verb the vowel of the preterite plural and past participle has made its way into the infinitive and present tense. This took place during the Middle English period. The preterite *run* was at one time found not unfrequently in literature, and is still in use among the uneducated (365).

201. The Anglo-Saxon strong verb *windan*, 'to move in a winding course,' has been transmitted in this sense to Modern English. But there is another English verb, *wind*, 'to sound by blowing,' derived from the noun 'wind.' This should strictly be inflected according to the weak conjugation, and in certain senses is so. But the forms of the two verbs have to some extent acted upon each other. In consequence, the first has occasionally been inflected according to the weak conjugation; but more often the second according to the strong. Thus, such a usage as "the way winded over the hill" can sometimes be met with; while the corresponding usage "he wound his horn" is even common. It is further to be added that in the sense just given, the derivative verb *wind* not only assumes at times the inflection of the strong verb, but invariably its pronunciation;

whereas in other of its significations, as when we say "the horse is winded," the verb has not only the weak form invariably, but is pronounced not *wīnd* but *wĭnd*.

202. There is one peculiarity that marks in particular the verbs of this class. This is that in ordinary usage the original ending *-en* of the past participle has been dropped from all of them. It is true that in poetry, and in certain special phrases, *bounden*, *drunken*, *shrunken*, *sunken*, and *foughten* occasionally appear. But these, when found, have almost invariably lost the participial sense, and are simply adjectives. This is the only class of strong verbs which is characterized throughout by this peculiarity. *Holpen*, from *help*, would indeed be strictly an exception to this rule; but here again the strong forms of this verb belong to poetry.

203. Another thing noticeable about this class is that with the exception of *beornan*, 'to burn,' — which had a peculiar history of its own, — not one of the verbs of the first subdivision (189) ever went entirely over to the weak conjugation. On the other hand, all the verbs that survived of the other subdivisions did so with the exceptions of *help* and *fight*. The following are the verbs which in Modern English have abandoned their strong forms: —

1. bell, 'to roar' (*bellan*).
2. delve (*delfan*).
3. melt (*meltan*).
4. swell (*swellan*).
5. yell (*giellan*).
6. yelp (*gielpan*).
7. yield (*gieldan*).

8. bark (*beorcan*).
9. burn (*beornan*).
10. carve (*ceorfan*).
11. smart (*smeortan*).
12. starve (*steorfan*).
13. swerve ? (*sweorfan*, 'to polish').
14. warp (*weorpan*).
15. braid (*bregdan*).
16. burst (*berstan*).
17. mourn (*murnan*).
18. spurn (*spurnan*).
19. thresh (*ðerscan*).

204. One of these verbs, *swell*, still shows frequently the strong past participle *swollen*, but in general that form is used as an adjective. *Bursten*, *carven*, and *molten* are also adjectives which owe their existence to the original past participles of *burst*, *carve*, and *melt*, and at times are treated as participles in poetry. *Starven*, 'starved,' and *yolden*, 'yielded,' lasted down also to the beginning of the Modern English period. In truth, the forms of several of these verbs occasionally appear in the poetry of the early period of Modern English, not only because the language of poetry naturally preserves archaic forms, but because there was at that time a constant effort to revive forms gone out of ordinary use. For example, *molt*, an obsolete preterite, is used by Sackville in the following lines in the "Induction to the Mirror for Magistrates": —

> My heart so *molt* to see his grief so great
> As feelingly, methought, it dropt away.

STRONG VERBS. — CLASS IV.

205. In Anglo-Saxon the vowel-variation was generally according to the following scheme: —

e; æ, ǣ; o.

This class contained in the early speech about ten verbs. The following survive: —

1. bear,	beran; *bear*	bær, bǣron; *bore*	boren. *born(e)*
2. break,	brecan; *break*	bræc, brǣcon; *broke*	brocen. *broke(n)*
3. come,	cuman; *come*	cōm, cōmon; *came*	cumen. *come*
4. shear,	scieran; *shear*	scear, scēaron; *shore*	scoren. *shorn*
5. steal,	stelan; *steal*	stæl, stǣlon; *stole*	stolen. *stolen*
6. tear,	teran; *tear*	tær, tǣron; *tore*	toren. *torn*

206. With the exception of *cuman* — which is peculiarly irregular — the short vowel of the infinitive and the present tense of all these verbs has been lengthened in their Modern English representatives. The Early English preterites were based upon their corresponding Anglo-Saxon forms, and all exhibited the vowel *a*. But during the Middle English period — and in the case of some verbs perhaps earlier — this vowel was displaced by the *o* of the past participle. Hence the earlier preterites *bare*, *brake*, *shar(e)*, *stale*, and *tare* gave way to the forms now existing. But as certain of them — *bare*, *brake*, and *tare* particularly — maintained themselves in literature, at the beginning of the Modern English period, alongside of *bore*, *broke*, and *tore*, they have never fallen into

absolute disuse. They are met with occasionally, particularly in poetry, and in any style intentionally made archaic.

207. The past participles of these verbs generally retain the final *-n* in Modern English. In colloquial usage, however, *broke* and *stole* are found alongside of *broken* and *stolen*, and these abbreviated forms have occasionally made their appearance in literature.

208. *Come* has differed from the other verbs of this class during the whole period of its history. The preterite *com(e)* was preserved in the South, but was early replaced by *cam(e)* in the North. This latter form made its way into the Midland. In the literature of the beginning of the Middle English period it is found constantly in the Wycliffite version of the Scriptures, and not unfrequently in Chaucer, Gower, and Langland. After the fourteenth century it became the established form, though the older preterite *come* is still in use among the uneducated, and can sometimes be found somewhat late in the literary speech. The past participle of this verb retained the final *-n* for a long period. *Comen*, in fact, did not die out till the seventeenth century.

209. Not one of these verbs has gone completely over to the weak conjugation. *Shear* has developed the weak preterite and participle, *sheared;* but the strong forms still survive. If *sheared* is more common in the preterite than *shore*, in the past participle *shorn* is more common than *sheared.*

210. In addition to the six original verbs of this

class that have survived, Modern English has received another. This is *wear*, which is derived from the Anglo-Saxon weak verb *werian; werede; wered.* Down to the fifteenth century certainly, and, perhaps, to the sixteenth, it was inflected as follows: —

weren, werede, wered.

So it always appears in Chaucer. But during the latter part of the Middle English period, it abandoned its strictly correct forms and replaced them by those of the strong conjugation, doubtless after the analogy of words like *bear* and *tear*. At the beginning of the Modern English period, it regularly presented the following as its principal parts: —

7. wear; ware *or* wore; worn.

STRONG VERBS. — CLASS V.

211. This class is closely allied to the preceding, and is sometimes joined with it. The vowel-change is the same with the exception of the past participle, and is, in general, according to the following scheme: —

e; æ, ǣ; e.

Four verbs, however, that have survived have *i* in the infinitive and present tense, and there are other variations the origin of which it is unnecessary to enter into here.

212. Nearly thirty verbs belonged to this class in Anglo-Saxon. Of these the following survive: —

1. bid,	biddan;	bæd,	bǣdon;	beden.
	bid		*bad(e), bid*	*bidden, bid*
2. eat,	etan;	æt,	ǣton;	eten.
	eat		*ate, eat*	*eaten, eat*
3. get,	gietan;	geat,	gēaton;	gieten.
	get		*got*	*gotten, got*
4. give,	giefan;	geaf,	gēafon;	giefen.
	give		*gave*	*given*
5. lie,	licgan;	læg,	lǣgon;	legen.
	lie		*lay*	*lain*
6. see,	sēon;	seah,	sāwon;	sewen.
	see		*saw*	*seen*
7. sit,	sittan;	sæt,	sǣton;	seten.
	sit		*sat*	*sat*
8. speak,	specan; [1]	spæc,	spǣcon;	specen.
	speak		*spoke*	*spoken*
9. tread,	tredan;	træd,	trǣdon;	treden.
	tread		*trod(e)*	*trodden*
10. weave,	wefan;	wæf,	wǣfon;	wefen.
	weave		*wove*	*woven*

213. In the history of these words it will be observed that the normal preterites *gat*, *spake*, *trad*, and *waf* have been displaced in Modern English by *got*, *spoke*, *trod(e)*, and *wove*. The corresponding participles have also become *gotten* or *got*, *spoken*, *trodden*, and *woven*. In all these cases the forms with *o* had made their appearance in the language as early as the fourteenth century. In the writings of that time even *ȝoven* is a past participle of *ȝive*, 'give,' and sometimes

[1] *Specan* is late Anglo-Saxon; the earlier form was *sprecan*.

can be found as a preterite plural, though its use was not perpetuated in either case.

214. The origin of these forms is somewhat uncertain. It is probable that *o* was first introduced into the past participle after the analogy of the participles of the preceding class, with which this one is so closely connected. From the past participle these forms seem then to have made their way into the preterite. After the fourteenth century they became common, and were finally regarded as the standard forms. Still *gat* and *spake* have never died out, though they are now archaic.

215. Certain of the verbs of this class have had a somewhat peculiar history. The strong intransitive verb *lie* has been constantly confused through all the periods of Modern English with the weak transitive verb *lay*, and this error exhibits itself occasionally in literature.[1] The same is true, at least as regards the language of the uneducated, of the strong verb *sit*, which is frequently confounded with the weak verb *set*. More remarkable, perhaps, than either is *see*, which in the language of low life has the same form *see* as its preterite, instead of *saw*. This goes back to the

[1] *E.g.* But let not a man trust his victorie over his nature too farre; for nature will *lay* buried a great time, and yet revive upon the occasion of temptation. — BACON, *Essays* (*Of Nature in Man*).

> Thou . . . send'st him shivering in thy playful spray
> * * * * *
> And dashest him again to earth: — there let him *lay*.
> BYRON, *Childe Harold*, iv. st. 180.

Middle English period, and may be much earlier. It has sometimes made its way into literature.[1]

216. In the written language, the past participle usually retains the original final *-n*, and invariably so in the case of *give*, *lie*, and *see*. In colloquial speech this *-n* is sometimes dropped. The abbreviated participial forms *bid*, *eat*, *spoke*, *trod*, and *wove* have been used with varying degrees of frequency at different periods of Modern English; and, generally speaking, the shorter form *got* has been much more common, both in speech and in writing, than the fuller *gotten*. The opposite is the fact, however, in the case of the compound *forget*, where *forgotten* is preferred to *forgot*. The preterite has sometimes made its way into the past participle. *Bade* so used is not uncommon, and *sat* or *sate* is now the regular form for which *sitten* — analogous to *bidden* — was once employed.

217. *Bid* really represents two Anglo-Saxon strong verbs which have been hopelessly confused both as regards inflection and meaning. The forms here found are, on the whole, the nearest to *biddan*, which means 'to ask, invite, pray,' and in Early English would be represented by the following inflection: —

bidde(n); bad, beden; beden.

[1] This page . . . of very speciall frendshippe *se* his tyme to set him forwarde. — SIR THOMAS MORE, *Richard III.*, page 519.

Who *see* a master of mine? — GREENE, *George-a-Greene*, ed. 1861, page 262.

About noon set sail, in our way I *see* many barks and masts. — PEPYS'S *Diary*, April 8, 1660.

Be sure you say you *see* him hurt himself. — PORTER, *The Villain*, ed. 1670, page 67.

The other verb is *bēodan*, which belongs to Class II. (185). It means 'to offer, announce, command,' and in Anglo-Saxon and Early English presents properly the following forms: —

bēodan;	bēad,	budon;	boden.
bede(n);	bed,	buden;	boden.

The forms of these verbs were early confounded with one another, and to a great extent used interchangeably. Confusion of meaning naturally followed confusion of form. A striking result of this is seen in the compound *forbid*, which represents, so far as meaning is concerned, the Anglo-Saxon *for-bēodan*, while its forms are mainly due to *biddan*.

218. *Weave* was at one period frequently inflected according to the weak conjugation, and even now it has at times the preterite and past participle *weaved*. On the other hand, to this class may be assigned the word *spit*, on the strength of an inflection it has occasionally had. Strictly it is a weak verb (274) and based upon a weak original; yet during its history it has been sometimes inflected as follows: —

11.	spit;	spat;	spitten.

219. To this class belong also two verbs, one of which was originally defective, the other has become so. The first of these is *wesan*, which has furnished the preterite of the substantive verb (442). The second had a full inflection in Anglo-Saxon. Its principal parts were as follows: —

cweðan;	cwæð,	cwǣdon;	cweden.

In the fourteenth century it was rare that any other part of this verb beside the preterite was used; but the preterite itself was then very common. By that time the forms with *e*, *cweð* and *cweden*, had been generally abandoned for those with *o*. The verb then appeared indifferently with the consonant of the singular or of the plural, as *quoth* or *quod;* but the former became the prevalent form before the end of the Middle English period. The compound *be-queathe* has retained the full verbal inflection, but has passed entirely over to the weak conjugation. The same change characterizes *fret*, 'to chafe, disturb,' which is a compound of *eat*, and had for its first sense 'to devour.' The Anglo-Saxon verb is *fretan;* and the old strong past participle *fretten* lasted down to the Modern English period.

220. The following verbs originally belonging to this class have gone over to the weak conjugation: —

1. fret (*fretan*).
2. knead (*cnedan*).
3. mete (*metan*).
4. be-queathe (*be-cweðan*).
5. weigh (*wegan*).
6. wreak (*wrecan*).

STRONG VERBS. — CLASS VI.

221. In the verbs of this class the following is the regular variation of the radical vowel in Anglo-Saxon: —

a; ō, ō; a.

There were over thirty verbs belonging to this class in the early tongue. The following survive with the strong inflection: —

1. draw,	dragan;	drōg, drōgon;	dragen.
	draw	*drew*	*drawn*
2. heave,	hebban;	hōf, hōfon;	hafen.
	heave	*hove*	*hove*
3. (for)sake,	sacan;	sōc, sōcon;	sacen.
	-sake	*-sook*	*-saken*
4. shake,	scacan;	scōc, scōcon;	scacen.
	shake	*shook*	*shaken*
5. slay,	slēan;	slōh, slōgon;	slagen.
	slay	*slew*	*slain*
6. stand,	standan;	stōd, stōdon;	standen.
	stand	*stood*	*stood*
7. swear,	swerian;	swōr, swōron;	sworen.
	swear	*swore*	*sworn*
8. take,	tacan;	tōc, tōcon;	tacen.
	take	*took*	*taken*
9. wake,	-wacan;	wōc, wōcon;	wacen.
	wake	*woke*	*woke*

222. To this class may be best referred two verbs which in Modern English are inflected according to the strong conjugation as well as the weak. They are the following: —

10. reeve;	rove;	rove.
11. stave;	stove;	stove.

The first of these is a technical naval word. Its derivation is uncertain, and it probably belongs exclusively to Modern English. The second, *stave*, is pretty certainly a modern verb, and is doubtless formed directly from the substantive *stave* or *staff*. Before

the present century, certainly, the weak form *staved* was much more common than the corresponding form *stove*.

223. In a number of verbs of this class the preterite was used as the past participle in the early period of Modern English. *Forsook*, *shook*, and *took*, with its compounds *mistook* and *undertook*, were at one time very commonly used with *have* to form the perfect tense (314). In the case of *stand* this has become the established rule with the preterite *stood*, which has supplanted entirely the etymologically correct form *stonden*. It will be further noticed that this verb *stand* loses in the preterite its *n*.

224. A statement somewhat similar about the permanent intrusion of the preterite into the past participle can be made of the verb *wake*, which has lost its original past participle *waken*. The weak form *waked* is more common, however, in that part of the verb than the strong preterite form *woke*. But this is not true of the compound *awake*, in which the participle *awoke*, taken from the preterite, stands side by side in usage with *awaked*. In this verb the original participle *awaken* has disappeared from the inflection, and, with its final *-n* dropped, survives now only as an adjective.

225. In the case of two of these verbs, *draw* and *slay*, the original preterites *droh*, *drow*, and *sloh*, *slow*, have been replaced by forms with the vowel *e*. These made their appearance in the Old English period. It is hard to say what influences brought about this

change. In the case of *draw*, it may have been after the analogy of *knaw*, a common variant form of *know*.

226. The verb *heave* has the weak inflection as well as the strong. The weak forms showed themselves indeed towards the end of the Anglo-Saxon period, and have been in constant use ever since. The preterite *hove* is more common than the past participle of the same form. Into the latter the vowel *o* of the former had early intruded, giving us *hoven* instead of *haven*. But to both, though more especially to the past participle, the language, at least the literary language, prefers in most cases *heaved*.

227. Though a few verbs such as *bide* and *gin* are rarely to be met with in Modern English save as compounded, the word *forsake* — from *for* and *sacan*, 'to contend,' — is the single instance of the preservation in our language of a compound in which the simple verb has perished entirely.

228. The verb *swear* of this class has been marked by certain irregularities which belonged to it from the earliest time. In particular, during the Middle English period, it developed the preterite *sware* along with the regularly formed *swore*. This was probably done under the influence of the earlier preterites *bare* and *tare* of the fourth class (206). The preterite *sware* was once common, being in fact the only form found in our version of the Bible. It is still in existence, though confined usually to poetry or to the designedly archaic style.

229. There is some doubt whether the simple verb *tacan*, 'to take,' existed in Anglo-Saxon, though verbs compounded of it are found. The same statement is true of *wacan*, though of this word the preterite and past participle certainly occur. The modern *wake* has behind it both a strong and a weak verb, and it has had both strong and weak forms during the whole period of its history. But the latter have until lately been generally preferred. In fact, the strong form *woke* almost disappeared for several centuries from the language of literature, — so much so that it was not even recognized until lately in our dictionaries. It has now, however, become full as common as the weak form *waked* (247).

230. Most of the Anglo-Saxon verbs belonging to this class have been preserved in Modern English, though the large majority of them have gone over entirely or partially to the weak conjugation. The following is the list of these: —

1. ache (*acan*).
2. bake (*bacan*).
3. drag ? (*dragan*).
4. fare (*faran*).
5. flay (*flēan*).
6. gnaw (*gnagan*).
7. grave (*grafan*).
8. lade (*hladan*).
9. laugh (*hliehhan*).
10. scathe (*sceððan*).
11. shape (*scieppan*).
12. shave (*scafan*).
13. step (*steppan*).
14. wade (*wadan*).
15. wash (*wascan*).
16. wax (*weaxan*).

Drag is particularly doubtful; instead of being a variant of *draw*, it may have owed its origin to a Norse verb of the same meaning.

231. A very marked peculiarity of all these verbs which have gone over to the weak conjugation is the extent to which they have retained their strong participial forms. *Grave*, *lade*, *shape*, and *shave* have still in good use the original participles *graven*, *laden*, *shapen*, and *shaven*. *Shapen* is, to be sure, somewhat archaic, and the same may be said of *gnawn*, which in the early period of Modern English occasionally appears. But even the obsolete or archaic participles *baken*, *flain*, *washen*, and *waxen* lasted down to a late period, usually, of course, in the sense of adjectives.

232. A variant form of *lade* is *load*, which had also the past participle *loaden*, now comparatively little used. *Load* may have come from the Anglo-Saxon verb of which *lade* is the modern representative, but it is more probably from the noun *load*, itself a derivative of the primitive verb. In the latter case, it would be precisely like the verb *loan* derived from the noun spelled the same way, and thereby furnishing a variant form to *lene*, which, during the Middle English period, was corrupted into *lend* by the addition of a *d*.

STRONG VERBS. — CLASS VII.

233. This includes the whole body of verbs still existing in Anglo-Saxon, which in the primitive Teutonic had been subject to reduplication (16). The number in our early speech was somewhat over fifty. In all of them the contraction of the reduplicating and radical syllables gave usually *ē* or *ēo* as the vowel to both numbers of the preterite (17).

234. Of these fifty and more verbs the following still survive as members of the strong conjugation: —

1. beat,	bēatan; *beat*	bēot, bēoton; *beat*	bēaten. *beaten, beat*
2. blow (of wind, etc.),	blāwan; *blow*	blēow, blēowon; *blew*	blāwen. *blown*
3. blow ('to bloom'),	blōwan; *blow*	blēow, blēowon; *blew*	blowen. *blown*
4. crow,	crāwan; *crow*	crēow, crēowon; *crew*	crāwen. *crowed*
5. fall,	feallan; *fall*	fēoll, fēollon; *fell*	fēallen. *fallen*
6. grow,	grōwan; *grow*	grēow, grēowon; *grew*	grōwen. *grown*
7. hang,	hōn; *hang*	hēng, hēngon; *hung*	hangen. *hung*
8. hold,	healdan; *hold*	hēold, hēoldon; *held*	healden. *held, holden*
9. know,	cnāwan; *know*	cnēow, cnēowon; *knew*	cnāwen. *known*
10. throw,	þrāwan; *throw*	þrēow, þrēowon; *threw*	þrāwen. *thrown*

235. *Blow*, from *blāwan*, has sometimes weak forms as well as the regular strong ones, though hardly in the language of literature. The preterite of *blow*, from *blōwan*, 'to bloom,' is met with rarely. *Crow* has a weak preterite as well as a strong one, and in the past participle the weak *crowed* has supplanted the etymologically correct *crown*. In the case of *hold*, the preterite has made its way into the past participle, though

the original form *holden* still survives, and in certain legal phrases is the one regularly employed.

236. *Hang* has a peculiar history of its own. In Anglo-Saxon, along with the strong verb *hōn*, there was a weak verb, *hangian*. In Early English the forms of these two were intermixed. The weak verb was adopted as the present and infinitive of both, and *hōn* was consequently disused. The past participle of the strong verb, *honge(n)*, originally *hangen*, made its way into the preterite, probably at first into the plural, and then into the singular. This did not take place early in the language of literature. Chaucer, for instance, still has the preterite *heng*. It was during the Middle English period that *hung* became the established form, displacing the still earlier *hong*. Attempts have been made in Modern English to make a distinction between the use of the strong and the weak verb; but so far none can be said to have established itself in the best usage, though there are certain expressions in which the employment of the one is generally preferred to that of the other.

237. Of the verbs originally belonging to this class, the following have gone over to the weak conjugation: —

1. ban (*bannan*).
2. claw (*clāwan*).
3. dread (*drēdan*).
4. flow (*flōwan*).
5. fold (*fealdan*).
6. glow (*glōwan*).
7. hew (*hēawan*).
8. hight (*hātan*).
9. leap (*hlēapan*).
10. let (*lētan*).

11. low (*hlōwan*).
12. mow (*māwan*).
13. root (of swine) (*wrōtan*).
14. row (*rōwan*).
15. shed (*scēadan*).
16. sleep (*slǣpan*).
17. sow (*sāwan*).
18. span (*spannan*).
19. swoop (*swāpan*).
20. walk (*wealcan*).
21. weep (*wēpan*).
22. wheeze (*hwēsan*).

To these may be added the two following words, obsolete in the standard literary speech, but frequently appearing in imitations of the archaic style: —

rede, from *rādan*, 'to advise.'
greet, from *grātan*, 'to mourn.'

238. All these verbs had exhibited weak forms at the beginning of the Middle English period, though the strong forms of many of them were still in existence, especially the form of the past participle. This three of them still continue to retain. *Hew*, *mow*, and *sow* have the strong participles *hewn*, *mown*, and *sown* as well as *hewed*, *mowed*, and *sowed*. In some of the English dialects, indeed, the original strong preterites *mew* and *sew* survive for *mowed* and *sowed*. *Flow* also shows occasionally the past participle *flown* in Modern English, though almost exclusively in phrases founded upon Milton's use of the word in a famous passage.[1]

239. The verb *hight*, 'to call,' or 'to be called,'

[1] When night
Darkens the streets, then wander forth the sons
Of Belial, *flown* with insolence and wine.
Paradise Lost, I., line 502.

has now hardly any existence outside of poetry or pieces written in the serio-comic style. It is etymologically only a preterite. The forms of the verbs in Anglo-Saxon were: —

hātan; heht *or* hēt, hehton *or* hēton; hāten.

In Early English this verb appeared with a great variety of forms, of which the following may serve as examples: —

haten, heten, hoten; hihte, hi3t, hyghte; hoten, het, hyght.

The preterite *hight,* frequently found with the ending *-e,* and perhaps considered in consequence a weak verb, made its way into the past participle and the present tense. This led gradually to the abandonment of the other forms, and by the end of the Middle English period *hight* had come to represent all parts of the verb which were then used. It extended even to the passive. The Anglo-Saxon *hātte,* 'I am called,' 'I was called,' was first represented in Early English by *hatte* and *hette;* but these forms also were abandoned for *hight.* The passive use still continues to some extent in Modern English, as, for example, in the following lines: —

> The one Abydos, the other Sestos *hight.*
>
> MARLOWE, *Hero and Leander,* 1st sestiad.

> Father he *hight* and he was in the parish.
>
> LONGFELLOW, *Children of the Lord's Supper,* line 48.

240. This completes the survey of the strong verbs still existing in English. We are now in a position to summarize the results of the examination that has been made, and to bring together under one view the scattered facts which have been recounted in the discussion of the several conjugations. It is, of course, to be borne in mind that in all statements of numbers which follow, the same rule prevails in Modern English as in Anglo-Saxon. It is the simple verbs alone that are taken into consideration, never the compound, unless express mention is made to that effect. With this proviso against misunderstanding, we are enabled to make safely certain general statements.

241. The first is that Modern English retains precisely seventy-eight of the three hundred strong verbs, more or less, which are to be found in Anglo-Saxon. Again, of these three hundred about eighty-eight others still exist in the language, but have gone over to the weak conjugation. This latter number cannot be stated with absolute accuracy. In the case of a few of the verbs, included in the lists of those which have passed from the strong conjugation to the weak, there is some doubt as to their originals belonging to the former. As a result of farther investigation, therefore, some may have to be taken from the number just given, or some may even have to be added to it. Still the list will not vary materially from what has already been set down. Accordingly, assuming eighty-eight as a number not far out of the way, it follows that over one hundred and thirty strong verbs, once

belonging to the language, have disappeared from it entirely. Some of these were obsolescent, or, perhaps, obsolete in later Anglo-Saxon, and cannot fairly be reckoned among the losses of our speech after the Conquest. Of those, however, that were in common use during the earliest period, and have since been dropped, the places have, in the majority of instances, been taken by verbs derived from the Norman-French.

242. The second statement is, that of the seventy-eight existing strong verbs which have come down to us from Anglo-Saxon verbs of the same conjugation, fourteen have either developed weak forms also, or possess weak forms which may be due to a weak Anglo-Saxon verb that stood alongside of the corresponding strong one. Hence they may be said to belong to both conjugations. These are the following, arranged under their respective classes: —

I.
abide.
cleave, 'to adhere.'
shine.
shrive.

II.
cleave, 'to split.'
seethe.

III.
climb.
help.

IV.
shear.

V.
weave.

VI.
heave.
wake.

VII.
crow.
hang.

Moreover, of these fourteen the strong forms of four — *cleave*, 'to adhere,' *seethe*, *climb*, and *help* — belong to the language of poetry rather than of prose. In the case of two others — *shear* and *heave* — the weak form is, on the whole, more common in the preterite of the first and in the participle of the second.

243. The third statement is, that to these seventy-eight verbs which have exhibited strong forms during all periods of our speech, there have been added, in the course of its history, thirteen others. These are *chide*, *hide*, *strive*, and *thrive*, which can be assigned to Class I.; *fling*, *ring*, *dig*, *stick*, and *string*, to Class III.; *wear*, to Class IV.; *spit*, to Class V.; and *reeve* and *stave*, to Class VI. Furthermore, as regards origin, seven of these thirteen — *chide*, *hide*, *ring*, *dig*, *stick*, *wear*, and *spit* — have been derived from verbs of the Anglo-Saxon weak conjugation; two — *thrive* and *fling* — have come into the language from the Old Norse; and one, *strive*, from the Old French. The remaining three are either of uncertain etymology or have sprung from nouns. Furthermore, six of these thirteen — *chide*, *strive*, *thrive*, *spit*, *reeve*, and *stave* — have also forms of the weak conjugation in use. The same is true, though not to so marked a degree, of *dig*.

244. The fourth statement is, that with the verbs directly descended from Anglo-Saxon primitives, and with those derived from other sources, there are at present in the language seventy-one verbs which belong exclusively to the strong conjugation; and twenty which form their principal parts sometimes according

to it and sometimes according to the weak conjugation. This would make ninety-one verbs now existing in our tongue which exhibit, either invariably or occasionally, the strong inflection.

245. As applied to the present speech, the foregoing statements are sufficiently accurate. At the same time, it must not be forgotten that great variations exist in the good usage of even the same period, and very great variations in the good usage of different periods. All general assertions are therefore liable to meet with specific exceptions. What would be regarded as correct at one time is treated as incorrect at another. *Comed* for *came* is met with frequently in the writings of the Elizabethan age. Wallis, the noted grammarian of the seventeenth century, whose work first came out in 1652, inserts in it the weak forms *beared*, *choosed*, *drawed*, *spinned*, *swimmed*, and *throwed*, along with *bore*, *chose*, *drew*, *spun*, *swum*, and *threw*. Though such weak forms could not have been common among the educated, it seems unreasonable to suppose that they were not employed by them at all. Furthermore, both Ben Jonson and Wallis introduced *snow*, *snew*, and *snown* as a regular inflection of *snow*, though these strong forms are certainly rare in literature, if even known to it at all.[1]

246. There has, however, been an occasional tendency on the part of weak verbs to pass over to the

[1] It is, perhaps, possible that this was a misprint in Ben Jonson's Grammar of *show*, *shew*, *shown*, and that it was copied on his authority by Wallis.

strong conjugation; and in the case of three, a strong passive participle has been added to their inflection. They are the following: —

1. show,	showed,	showed, shown.
2. strew,	strewed,	strewed, strewn.
3. saw,	sawed,	sawed, sawn.

The first of these is derived from the Anglo-Saxon weak verb *scēawian, scēawode;* the second, which is often written and oftener pronounced as *strow*, is from the Anglo-Saxon weak verb *strēawian, strēawode.* It was in the Middle English period that the strong participial forms of these two words came into use alongside of the weak ones; and, as in like instances, the analogy of verbs like *know, blow, grow*, and others, had the most powerful influence in their production and wide employment. But the strong forms never extended beyond the past participle, though the strong preterite *shew* for *showed* early established itself in the provincial dialects, and has never died out. *Saw*, as a verb, does not apparently go back to an early period. It was doubtless derived from the noun spelled in the same way, and its strong past participle seems to have been developed first in Modern English.

247. One further point needs to be brought out before concluding the examination of the changes that have gone on in the strong conjugation. No verb

which reached the beginning of the Modern English period with strong forms in common use ever let the strong forms go out of common use. There are verbs such as *climb* and *help* which now belong regularly to the weak conjugation, though they are occasionally inflected according to the strong. But this was as true of them in the sixteenth century as it is now.[1] We are consequently enabled to say, that since the reign of Queen Elizabeth (1558–1603), our speech has not lost a single strong verb. What the language then had it has ever since retained. Nor does it manifest the least disposition to abandon any it now has. True, there have been periods in which weak preterites and past participles, like *choosed*, *blowed*, *freezed*, *weaved*, and numerous others, occur to a greater or less extent, and at times have found favor with some grammarians. But their employment has never broadened and perpetuated itself. In fact, the present disposition of the language is not only to cling firmly to the strong verbs it already possesses, but to strengthen their hold, and even to extend their number whenever possible. Forms once common, and in the best usage, such as *shaked*, *shined*, *strived*, and *thrived*, are either now much rarer than *shook*, *shone*, *strove*, and *throve*, or else are not met with at all. *Woke*, though not found in Shakspeare, Milton, and the English Bible, has become, during the last century, full as common as *waked* as the preterite of *wake;* while *dug* may be said to have supplanted *digged*, the regular preterite,

[1] See page 155.

not only of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but of all preceding periods.

248. So decided, in truth, is the disposition the language now displays to prefer the strong forms, that it is not impossible that some verbs now inflected weak will return to their old conjugation, or that others which are strictly weak will pass over to the strong. Attention has already been called to the inflection of *dive* (188). Cases of this kind may be always expected to occur. The English dialects also have retained the strong form in some cases where the literary language has assumed the weak, and at any moment the original inflection may be taken up by the latter from the former. These dialects, indeed, have often developed strong forms in verbs that are strictly weak, as has already been seen in the case of *show, shew*, which is found both in England and this country. So, also, *squeeze* has a strong preterite *squoze* in the dialects of some parts of England; and this can be heard, likewise, in various parts of the United States in the speech of the uneducated. Sporadic forms like these crop up here and there constantly in our literature; and their occurrence renders it unsafe to assert that particular inflections are never employed. It can only be said that they are not the ones usually employed.

The Weak Conjugation.

249. It has already been pointed out that the distinguishing characteristic of the weak conjugation is, that it now adds, or originally added, a syllable to form

the preterite; and that this syllable was, according to a generally received theory, nothing more than a verbal form corresponding to the reduplicated preterite of the English verb *do*. This supposed ancient form may be best explained by the following hypothetical account of its origin. Instead of employing an expression equivalent to *I did love*, the preterite was denoted by an expression equivalent to *love-did-I;* and this appended verb was so cut down, and so closely united with the leading verb, that only traces of it were left. It was only in the dual and plural numbers of the Gothic preterite that its full form was seen. In Anglo-Saxon all that remained of it in the first person of the preterite singular was *-de*. For instance, *hēdan*, 'to heed,' had for its past tense *hēdde*, 'heeded.' In general terms it may be said that the Anglo-Saxon weak verb formed its preterite by adding *-de*, or, in certain circumstances, *-te*.

250. Its passive participle was also distinguished from that of the strong conjugation by the fact that the latter ended in *-en*; while in the former the termination was *-d*, or occasionally *-t*.

251. Furthermore, the Teutonic weak verb was divided into three conjugations, according to the character of the connective which entered between the stem and the termination. All of these three are preserved in Gothic and Old High German. But in the other early Teutonic tongues the third of the conjugations above mentioned, the one with the connective *ai*, had practically disappeared. The verbs originally

belonging to it had largely gone over to the second conjugation, and the few which survived had intermixed forms derived from both the second and the first.

252. The other two conjugations were both flourishing during the earliest period. The original connective in the first class had in Anglo-Saxon become *e*, in the second it had become *o*; and hence the termination added to the stem was in one case *-ede*, in the other *-ode*. But a further modification of the inflection took place in the former class. When the stem of a verb of the first conjugation was long, the connective *e* was dropped in the preterite. For illustration, *hȳr-an*, 'to hear,' with its long stem *hȳr*, formed the preterite *hȳr-de*, 'heard,' not *hȳr-e-de*.

253. In the English of the Anglo-Saxon period, consequently, there may be said to be two conjugations of the weak verb, — one forming the preterite by adding *-de*, or *-ede*, to the stem, the other by adding *-ode*. There were phonetic influences at work which, under certain conditions, changed or modified the character of the terminations, as will be seen farther on, but those just given may be regarded as the strictly normal endings. The following examples will illustrate the differences between them: —

dēm-an,	*deem*	I.	dēm-de.
fyll-an,	*fill*		fyl-de.
er-ia-n,	*plough*		er-e-de.
trymm-an,	*strengthen*		trym-e-de.
lōc-ia-n,	*look*	II.	lōc-o-de.
wun-ia-n,	*dwell*		wun-o-de.

254. These represent the two early weak conjugations as distinguished from each other in the preterite. But within certainly a century and a half after the Norman Conquest the distinction had disappeared. The connective *o* of the second conjugation was generally weakened to *e*, although it is occasionally found even as late as the end of the thirteenth century, and perhaps still later. A necessary result of this was, that verbs of the original Anglo-Saxon second conjugation formed their preterites precisely like short-stemmed verbs of the first conjugation, both having the connective *e*. Thus, in the case of the preterites of the two verbs of that conjugation just given, *lōcode* was in Early English represented by *lokede*, and *wunode* by *wonede*.

255. To this same practice conformed, in the latter part of the Old English period, and still more in the Middle English period, many, and perhaps most, of the long-stemmed verbs of the first conjugation. To use the preceding examples, the preterite *dēmde* became *demede;* the preterite *fylde* became both *filde* and *fillede*, with an increasing tendency, after the beginning of the Middle English period, to employ the fuller form. During that period, consequently, the connective *e* had become the general connective of the weak preterite. This it has always since remained. There were, and still are, many exceptions to this rule; but, as a general statement, it is sufficiently accurate.

256. It may therefore be said that *-ede* in the Old English period was added to the stem of weak verbs

to form the preterite. Thus the past tense of *look* was written and pronounced *lookèdè*. But in the fourteenth century certainly, and perhaps earlier, the *-e* final of *-ede* began to disappear from pronunciation, and in the fifteenth century the practice became general not to sound it. At the beginning of Modern English it had disappeared entirely. Its disuse in pronunciation led, likewise, to its disuse in writing or printing; *lookèdè*, to continue the same illustration, became *lookèd*. This left *-ed* as the addition with which to form the preterite in Modern English. It was also attended by another consequence. As the past participle usually ended in *-ed*, the dropping of the final *-e* of the preterite was followed necessarily by the result that the forms for the preterite and the past participle became the same.

257. But the modification of the preterite did not stop here. At the beginning of the Modern English period the connective *e* of the preterite ending *-ed* — and the statement is likewise true of the past participle — began to be dropped in pronunciation. During the sixteenth century, and perhaps even later, usage seems to have varied on this point. In some words, or by some persons, the *-ed* was pronounced as a distinct syllable; and in other words, or by other persons, the *e* was not sounded, and the *-d* was joined directly in pronunciation to the preceding syllable, where it necessarily had often the sound of *t*. *Lookèd* of Middle English came, in consequence, in Modern English, to have the sound of *lookt*.

258. The process by which this result was reached was unquestionably a gradual one. The hurried speech of ordinary colloquial intercourse was necessarily the first to adopt it, and from that it made its way into general use. The poetry of the end of the sixteenth century shows that the dropping of the *e* of *-ed* in pronunciation had become widespread, and almost as universal as it is in the nineteenth. On this point the spelling is now of little or no service; for, in writing or print, the full orthographic form is, in the large majority of instances, retained. At the present time the *-ed* is rarely heard as a distinct syllable, save in verbs ending in *-d* or *-t*, as *dread, dreadèd, wet, wettèd;* and in certain participles used as adjectives, such as *agèd* and *learnèd*, to distinguish them from the same words when used strictly as participles. The dropping of the *e* in some cases, however, caused a change of pronunciation, which, in return, reacted upon the spelling of the preterite; but this will be considered later (265).

259. The termination of the regular preterite of the weak verb can, therefore, be described as having passed through the following changes: At the outset, it was *-de, -ede*, or *-ode*. All these were represented in Old English generally by *-ede*, and occasionally by *-de* simply. *Ede*, however, increased steadily in use during the Middle English period, but during that same period dropped its final *-e*. This left *-ed* to be transmitted to Modern English as the normal termination of the preterite, though in the case of verbs ending

with the unsounded final *-e*, such as *love*, *hate*, the vowel was not doubled. This statement is necessarily true only of the present spelling, not, as we have just seen, of the present pronunciation. We add *-ed* in writing; in speaking we usually add only *-d*, or sometimes *-t*. We write *thanked*, for instance; we give it the sound of *thankt*.

260. In the following scheme the variations in form and pronunciation which have marked the history of the verbs *deem*, *fill*, and *look* in their transition from Anglo-Saxon through Old English and Middle English to Modern English, will indicate the nature of the changes that have taken place in the regular verb of the weak conjugation: —

dēman,	dēmde;	demde;	demede;	deemed (*pron.* deemd).
fyllan,	fylde;	filde;	fillede;	filled (*pron.* fild).
lōcian,	lōcode;	lokede;	lookede;	looked (*pron.* lookt).

261. So much for the strictly regular forms. We come now to the consideration of the

IRREGULAR VERBS OF THE WEAK CONJUGATION,

and of the causes which have led to the variations of form that now exist. These verbs may be divided into the two following classes: —

1. Verbs in which the vowel of the stem remains the same throughout, and the variations which occur affect only the terminations.
2. Verbs in which the vowel of the stem undergoes variation.

262. In discussing the verbs of the first class, it is to be remarked at the outset that, even in Anglo-Saxon, the termination of the preterite was subjected to that same modification, which has been widely extended in Modern English. From it have sprung, in consequence, a number of peculiar forms different from those of the regular inflection. As the connective *ia* weakened to *e* was dropped in the majority of verbs of the first weak conjugation, the result was, that *-de* was added directly to the stem, as in the preterites *dēmde* and *fylde* given above (253). The effect of this was, in some cases, to change the pronunciation. The spelling conforming to the sound, *d* after certain consonants became *t*; and *-te* was the syllable added, and not *-de*.

263. In Anglo-Saxon, this was regularly the case when the stem of the verb ended in *c*, *p*, *t*, *x*, and sometimes in *s*, as will be seen by the following examples, in which the past participles are given as well as the preterites. It will be noticed that *c* final of the root passes, in the preterite, into *h* : —

Infinitives.	Preterites.	Past Participles.
sēcan, *seek*,	sōhte,	sōht.
cēpan, *keep*,	cēpte,	cēped.
cyssan, *kiss*,	cyste,	cyssed.
grētan, *greet*,	grētte,	grēted.
lixan, *shine*,	lixte,	lixed.

264. In Early English some of these verbs occasionally resumed the connective *e* before the ending

of the preterite. In that case the regular termination *-de* was employed, instead of *-te*. Thus, the past tenses of *cēpan* and *cyssan*, given above, became in later English, according to the pronunciation, either *kepte* and *kiste*, or *kepede* and *kissede*. There was a natural tendency to extend to all verbs a termination which was given to the vast majority. This, to a certain extent, diminished the number of those which, in Anglo-Saxon, had formed the preterite by adding *-te*. When, in later English, the final *-e* of this ending *-ede* dropped from the spelling, and the connective *e* from the pronunciation, change was rarely made in the orthography to indicate the change of sound. We retain the spelling of one form and the pronunciation of the other, as has been pointed out in the instances of *looked* and *thanked* (257, 259). These are types of a large number of words now existing in our speech.

265. It was not always the case, however, that the form which represented the actual pronunciation was rejected entirely. In some instances it continued in use, though rarely in exclusive use. The consequence is, that in Modern English, a number of double forms for the preterite and past participle are employed, differing from each other, in some cases, only in spelling, and not at all in pronunciation; or, if ever differing in pronunciation, they differ only in the sound of final *-d* or *-t*. They usually occur in words ending in *l*, *ll*, *n*, *p*, *sh*, or in those ending in the sound of *s*. The following list will furnish some of the more common examples: —

spell,	spelled, spelt.	fix,	fixed, fixt.
pen,	penned, pent.	spoil,	spoiled, spoilt.
learn,	learned, learnt.	bless,	blessed, blest.
dip,	dipped, dipt.	curse,	cursed, curst.

266. There are many double forms, like these, to be found at various periods in our literature; but in earlier times they usually represented actual difference of pronunciation. Thus Spenser, for instance, indicated as a rule the sound of the termination by its spelling. We find, for example, in the first canto of the first book of "The Faerie Queene," the preterites *advaunst, approcht, cald, chaunst, displaid, enhaunst, expeld, forst, gazd, glaunst, knockt, mournd, perceivd, paynd, pusht, raizd, retournd* or *returnd, seemd, stopt* and *strowd;* and also the past participles *benumbd, compeld, dazd, dismayd, drownd, enforst, ravisht, resolvd, y-rockt, stretcht, subdewd, tost,* and *vanquisht.* There can be found, it is true, the present way of indicating the fact that the *e* of the termination is not to be pronounced, by the insertion of the apostrophe in its place. Still this method does not occur in half a dozen instances. It is only when the ending constitutes a distinct syllable in pronunciation that we find the full form written by Spenser, as in *seemed, drowned,* and *forced* in this same canto. With us *-d* is no longer

added directly to the stem, except in a few cases to be considered later. The adding of *-t* is more common; but in general it may be said of this ending that it is found much oftener in the early literature of Modern English than in that of the present time.

267. A series of forms, allied to these, though of a somewhat different origin, comes now to be considered. In Anglo-Saxon, verbal stems ending in *-d* or *-t*, preceded by a consonant, usually dropped the final letter of the stem in the preterite. The conjugation of the verbs from which *send* and *gird* have been derived will show the original forms: —

sendan,	sende,	sended
gyrdan,	gyrde,	gyrded.

Occasionally in the Anglo-Saxon period, forms with *t* instead of *d* showed themselves in certain of these verbs; and there was even then a disposition to drop the *-ed* of the participle. In Early English the tendency to employ *t* for *d* became more pronounced. The termination *-te* accordingly took its place beside *-de* in many of these verbs, and was often far more common in some of them. Their introduction into the preterite may have been largely aided by their adoption into the past participle, where in many cases, certainly, they were at first more frequently found.

268. Here, again, the same course of proceeding took place as in the verbs whose history has just been given. After the contracted forms for the preterite

and past participle had become established, new and strictly regular forms were often developed by the adding of *-ed*. These have become the ones generally found in Modern English. Still some of these verbs with contract forms continue to survive in the language. They are included in the following list: —

1. lend,	lent.	4. spend,	spent.
2. rend,	rent.	5. (wend,	went).
3. send,	sent.		

Of these *rend* has occasionally the full form *rended;* while *went* has become the preterite of the verb *go,* and *wend* has developed, to take its place, the regular form *wended* (435).

269. Some of these verbs, however, are still found with full and contracted forms of the preterite and past participle existing side by side. Usage varies in the case of each, one form being more common in some verbs, the other more common in others. The following is the list: —

1. bend,	bended, bent.	4. geld,	gelded, gelt.
2. blend,	blended, blent.	5. gild,	gilded, gilt.
3. build,	builded, built.	6. gird,	girded, girt.

These are to be distinguished from such preterites as *learned* and *learnt, dwelled* and *dwelt, mixed* and *mixt, passed* and *past* (265); for in these latter, while there

is an actual difference in the spelling, there is usually no additional syllable heard in the pronunciation of the fuller form.

270. These verbs, it will be observed, have preserved a distinct form for the preterite and past participle either by changing *-d* into *-t*, or by adding, so as to form a distinct syllable, the ending *-ed* which had then come to be the one regularly employed. This latter was the method usually resorted to, even in the case of verbs ending in *-d* or *-t*. Thus the Early English *dreden* had a preterite *dredde*, and *greten* had the preterite *grette*. When the final *-e* ceased to be pronounced, the place of *-de* and *-te* was taken in both instances by the regular ending *-ed*. The Modern English forms are accordingly *dreaded* and *greeted*. But this change did not invariably occur. We come, in consequence, to the consideration of a class of verbs which dropped the termination of the preterite and past participle altogether. This, with the losses which took place in other parts of the verb, had the effect of making all the principal parts exactly alike in form.

271. To illustrate the precise history of these verbs, let us take two — *sprēdan*, 'to spread,' and *settan*, 'to set.' The following are the principal parts in Anglo-Saxon: —

Infinitive.	Preterite.	Past Participle.
sprǣdan,	sprǣdde,	sprǣded.
settan,	sette,	seted set(t) } .

The infinitives of these two verbs became in Old English *spreden* and *setten*, and, with the disappearance of the final *-n*, *sprede* and *sette*. With these latter agreed, as usual, the forms for the first person of the present tense. The past participle also dropped generally its ending. It had shown, even in the Anglo-Saxon period, a decided leaning towards contraction, as witness above in the case of *set(t)*, found alongside of *seted*. This now became the rule in verbs of this kind. Accordingly, during the Early English period these verbs presented ordinarily the following inflection: —

sprede,	spredde,	spred.
sette,	sette,	set.

272. During the fifteenth century the final *-e* disappeared from these forms in writing, as a result of its disappearance from pronunciation. In consequence, the second *d* or *t*, whenever it would have been left in the inflection, was dropped as unnecessary. The result accordingly was that the forms for the infinitive and the present, the preterite and the past participle, came to be precisely alike; and these verbs entered Modern English with the following inflection, which they still retain: —

spread,	spread,	spread.
set,	set,	set.

What is true of these is true of several other Anglo-Saxon verbs, whose principal parts have come to present no change of form in Modern English.

273. But the tendency to bring about this result was not limited to native verbs. Words were brought also into this class which did not belong to the Anglo-Saxon, but came from the Norse or the Norman-French. Even words which in Anglo-Saxon added *-ode* to form the preterite, and not simply *-de*, were sometimes made to conform to this inflection. It was inevitable, however, after verbs had thus been stripped of their original endings, and had been reduced to one unvarying form in their principal parts, that a reaction should set in. In some instances this has been wholly successful. The verb has become strictly regular. In other cases, contract and full forms of the preterite came into use, and have since been retained side by side. In certain instances the contract forms have become the exclusive ones. The general present practice of the language in regard to these latter will now be exhibited. In those derived from the Anglo-Saxon, the principal parts as found in that period, in the Early English period, and in the Modern English period, will be given in each case.

274. The following are the verbs that belonged to the weak conjugation in the original tongue. In the case of a few of them certain of the principal parts are theoretical, especially the past participles: —

1.	hreddan,	hredde,	hreded.
	redde(n) } ,	redde } ,	red } .
	ridde(n) } ,	ridde } ,	rid } .
	rid,	rid,	rid.

2.	settan,	sette,	seted set(t) } .
	sette(n),	sette,	set.
	set,	set,	set.
3.	scyttan,	scytte,	scyted.
	schutte(n) schette(n) } ,	schutte schette } ,	schut schet } .
	shut,	shut,	shut.
4.	spittan,	spitte,	spited.
	spitte(n),	spitte,	spit.
	spit,	spit,	spit.
5.	sprǣdan,	sprǣdde,	sprǣded.
	sprede(n),	spredde,	spred.
	spread,	spread,	spread.

275. The following verbs of this class originally belonged to the Anglo-Saxon strong conjugation; hence only the Early English forms nearest to the modern forms are given: —

6.	berste(n),	berst, *pl.* bursten,	bursten.
	burst,	burst,	burst.
7.	lete(n),	let lette } ,	leten.
	let,	let,	let.
8.	scheden,	schedde,	sched.
	shed,	shed,	shed.

9. Hight. (See Section 239.)

Burst has developed also a regular preterite and past participle *bursted*, which in the language of slang is frequently corrupted into "busted."

276. The following verbs of this class came into the language from the Old Norse: —

10.	caste(n), cast,	caste, cast,	cast. cast.
11.	cutte(n), cut,	cutte, cut,	cut. cut.
12.	hitte(n), hit,	hitte, hit,	hit. hit.
13.	putte(n), put,	putte, put,	put. put.

To this list may be added the word

14. 'stead,' and its compound 'bestead.'

Both of these were apparently little used till towards the beginning of Modern English, and indeed have never been common at any time. Here, also, probably belongs

15.	thrust,	thrust,	thrust.

There is a Middle English *thresten*, from the Anglo-Saxon *þræstian*, 'to twist'; but the Modern English verb probably comes from the Norse.

277. To the Old French we owe the two following verbs of this class: —

16.	coste(n), cost,	costed / coste,	costed / cost.
17.	hurten, hurt,	hurte, hurt,	hurt. hurt.

278. These seventeen verbs undergo now no change of form, though several of them occasionally exhibited full forms in the earlier speech. This inflection in some cases lasted down to the beginning of Modern English. *Cutted* and *spitted*, for example, can be found in the Middle English period, and the past participle *casted*, though used as an adjective, occurs in Shakspeare.[1] But there are a number of these verbs which, by the beginning of the Modern English period, had usually developed full regular forms alongside of the contract ones, and both have continued in use to the present time. Most of them belonged to the Anglo-Saxon weak conjugation; but of those in the following list that do not, *slit* is from the Anglo-Saxon strong conjugation, and *quit* comes from the Old French. Of the remaining two, *split* apparently did not make its entry into the language till about the sixteenth century, though on this point there is no certainty. It is possibly of Scandinavian origin. The second one, *bet*, is even of later origin, and its etymology is doubtful.

279. In the following list are comprised verbs which have full regular forms for the preterite and past participle, along with those in which the principal parts are the same throughout: —

1.	cnyttan,	cnytte,	cnyted.
	knitte(n),	knitte,	knitted / knit.
	knit,	knit / knitted,	knit / knitted.

[1] *Henry V.*, act iv. scene 1.

2.	swǣtan,	swǣtte,	swǣted.	
	swete(n),	swette,	swet.	
	sweat,	sweat sweated	sweat sweated	
3.	wǣtan,	wǣtte,	wǣted.	
	wete(n),	wette,	wet.	
	wet,	wet wetted	wet wetted	
4.	hwettan,	hwette,	hweted.	
	whette(n),	whette,	whet.	
	whet,	whetted whet	whetted whet	
5.	scrēadian,	scrēadode,	scrēadod.	
	schrede(n),	schredde,	schred.	
	shred,	shred shredded	shred shredded	
6.	slitten,	slitte,	slit.	
	slit,	slit slitted	slit slitted	
7.	quite(n),	quitte,	quit.	
	quit,	quitted quit	quitted quit	
8.	split,	split splitted	split splitted	
9.	bet,	bet betted	bet betted	

280. To this list may be added the somewhat rare verb

10.	wont,	wonted wont	wonted wont

This verb is derived from the past participle of the verb *won*, 'to dwell,' which is now obsolete, though occasionally appearing in poetry.[1] The original inflections were as follows: —

wunian,	wunode,	wunod.
wonie(n),	wonede,	wont.

The past participle *wont* used as a present developed its preterite *wonted* as early as the sixteenth century. The verb is still in use, though it cannot be called common.

281. In this list of ten verbs with double preterites and participles it is largely a matter of individual preference which of the two shall be adopted. The number, indeed, might be somewhat extended, if the various forms that have appeared at various times in the writings of good authors were to be included. The contracted form *wed* for *wedded*, especially in the past participle, is not infrequent. In the first period of Modern English, *lift* for *lifted* is sometimes met with,[2] and other unusual forms, either full or contract, are occasionally to be found in our literature. *Plight* for *plighted* would be an illustration. In the principal

[1] Out of the ground uprose,
As from his lair, the wild beast, where he *wons*
In forest wild, in thicket, brake, or den.
MILTON, *Paradise Lost*, VII., 457.

[2] *Lift*, as the preterite, LODGE and GREENE'S *Looking-Glass for London* in GREENE'S *Works*, ed. of 1861, page 123; as a past participle in MARLOWE'S *Tamburlaine I.*, act ii. scene 1; PEELE'S *David and Bethsabe*, ed. of 1861, page 468; CARTWRIGHT'S *Lady Errant*, act i. scene 2; SHADWELL'S *Libertine*, act i.

parts of those here included, the forms which seem to be preferred have been first mentioned. Yet on a question of varying usage, and of usage that varies at different periods, no absolute rule can be laid down which will be accepted by all.

282. Up to this period the anomalous verbs of the weak conjugation that have been mentioned, not only retain the same vowel through all their principal parts, they retain also the same length of that vowel. We now come to the discussion of the anomalous verbs of the second division (261). In these the vowel of the stem was either shortened in the preterite and the past participle, or it was changed entirely. According to these two sorts of change, the verbs of this division may be arranged in two classes.

283. The first class, which shortened the stem-vowel, is a development of the Middle and Modern English periods; for no such shortening was known to the Anglo-Saxon. It seems to have been partly due to the analogy of the vowel-change that went on in verbs of the strong conjugation, the influence of which could hardly fail to make itself felt to some extent on verbs of the weak conjugation, particularly on those that did not assume the full regular preterite ending, *-ed(e)*. This class may be conveniently subdivided further into two groups. The first will embrace the verbs whose stems ended in *-d* or *-t*, especially the former. These dropped the *-de* or *-te* of the termination, like the class to which *spread* and *set* belonged (274); but they differed from them in having the

vowel of the preterite shorter than that of the infinitive or of the present tense.

284. The list embraces the following verbs, in which the principal parts, as found in Anglo-Saxon, in Early English, and in Modern English, are given: —

1.	blēdan,	blēdde,	blēded.
	blede(n),	bledde,	bled.
	bleed,	blĕd,	blĕd.
2.	brēdan,	brēdde,	brēded.
	brede(n),	bredde,	bred.
	breed,	brĕd,	brĕd.
3.	fēdan,	fēdde,	fēded.
	fede(n),	fedde,	fed.
	feed,	fĕd,	fĕd.
4.	lǣdan,	lǣdde,	lǣded.
	lede(n),	ledde,	led.
	lead,	lĕd,	lĕd.
5.	mētan,	mētte,	mēted.
	mete(n),	mette,	met.
	meet,	mĕt.	mĕt.
6.	rēdan,	rēdde,	rēded.
	rede(n),	redde,	red.
	read,	rĕad,	rĕad.
7.	spēdan,	spēdde,	spēded.
	spede(n),	spedde,	sped.
	speed,	spĕd,	spĕd.
8.	tīdian,	tīdde,	tīded.
	(be)tide(n),	(be)tidde,	(be)tid.
	(be)tide,	(be)tĭd,	(be)tĭd.

285. The compound *betide* does not go back earlier than the Old English period, but the simple verb is

found in Anglo-Saxon, and was in constant use for several centuries later. In this list should etymologically be reckoned *chide*, *chĭd*, and *hide*, *hĭd;* but for the reasons given in section 175, it seems best to regard them as strong verbs. There is also another verb, *heat*, which, in Anglo-Saxon and Early English, was conjugated as follows: —

hǣtan,	hǣtte,	hǣted.
hete(n),	hette,	het.

This in Elizabethan English has a preterite, or at least a past participle, *hĕat*,[1] along with the full form *heated*, and this still is heard in the language of low life.

286. Two other verbs, *light* and *plead*, which are also inflected regularly, can be added to this list. One of them presents the following forms in Anglo-Saxon and Middle English: —

lihtan,	lihte,	lihted.
lighte(n),	lightede / lighte,	lighted / light.
light,	līt,	līt.

In this word, or rather in these words, are represented two Anglo-Saxon verbs, one meaning 'to shine,'

[1] If it once be *heat* in flames of fire.
GREENE, *Alphonsus*, ed. 1861, page 232.
The iron of itself though *heat* red hot.
SHAKSPEARE, *King John*, act iv. scene 1.
He's *heat* to the proof.
WEBSTER, *Northward Ho*, act i. scene 1.

and the other 'to alight.' Though different in origin, they have nearly the same inflections. The contracted forms are much more common with the modern verb derived from the first than with the one derived from the second. In the present literary use *lĭt* is almost entirely confined to *light* in the sense of 'to illuminate,' though in colloquial speech it is sometimes used with the other. *Plead* is from the Old French, and the preterite *plĕad* is far less common in the literary language than *pleaded*, though *ĭt* is perhaps as common as *lighted*. It is also to be added that *betide* sometimes exhibits the full regular form *betided*, and that *speed* also in certain senses has *speeded*.

287. The second group of verbs whose stems have come to be shortened in the preterite and past participle (283) embraces all those words which end in other letters than *-d* or *-t*. They are nineteen in number, and nearly one-half of them belonged to the strong conjugation in Anglo-Saxon. The first list will include those which have been weak verbs through all periods of their history.

1.	dælan,	dælde,	dæled.
	dele(n),	delede delte	deled delt
	deal,	dĕalt,	dĕalt.
2.	drēman,	drēmde,	drēmed.
	dreme(n),	dremede dremde	dremed.
	dream,	drĕamt,	drĕamt.

3.	fēlan,	fēlde,	fēled.
	fele(n),	felede, felte,	feled.
	feel,	fēlt,	fēlt.
4.	hȳran,	hȳrde,	hȳred.
	here(n),	herde,	herd.
	hear,	hĕard,	hĕard.
5.	cēpan,	cēpte,	cēped.
	kepe(n),	kepte,	kept.
	keep,	kept,	kept.
6.	hlinian,	hlinode,	hlinod.
	lene(n),	lenede,	(lened).
	lean,	lĕant,	lĕant.
7.	lǣfan,	lǣfde,	lǣfed.
	leve(n),	levede, lefte,	leved, left.
	leave,	left,	left.
8.	mænan,	mǣnde,	mǣned.
	mene(n),	mende,	mened, ment.
	mean,	mĕant,	mĕant.
9.	rēafian,	rēafode,	rēafod.
	reve(n),	revede, refte,	reved, reft.
	(be)reave,	reft,	reft.
10.	scēoian,	scode,	scod.
	shoe(n),	shode,	shod.
	shoe,	shod,	shod.

To these may be added the forms of *kneel* and *sweep* of which the Anglo-Saxon originals are doubtful:—

11.	knele(n), kneel,	knelede, knelt,	kneled. knelt.
12.	swepe(n), sweep,	swepede, swept,	sweped. swept.

288. From the strong conjugation in Anglo-Saxon the following anomalous verbs of the weak conjugation have been derived. The Roman numerals indicate the class to which they originally belonged: —

13.	cleve(n) (II.), cleave,	clevede, clĕft,	cleved } . cleft } clĕft.
14.	crepe(n) (II.), creep,	crepede } crepte } , crĕpt,	crepid } crept } . crĕpt.
15.	fle(n) (II.), flee,	fledde, flĕd,	fled. flĕd.
16.	lepe(n) (VII.), leap,	lepede } lepte } , lĕapt,	leped } lept } . lĕapt.
17.	lose(n) (II.), lose,	loste, lŏst,	lost. lŏst.
18.	slepe(n) (VII.), sleep,	slepte, slĕpt,	slept. slĕpt.
19.	wepe(n) (VII.), weep,	wepede } wepte } , wĕpt,	weped } wept } . wĕpt.

To the verbs of this list the strong verb *shoot* (180) has become so thoroughly assimilated that with the

practical disappearance of its past participle *shotten* it might fairly be reckoned among the anomalous verbs of the weak conjugation.

289. In a large number of these words, Middle and Modern English have developed full forms alongside of the contracted ones, and some of the former are even more common than the latter. Especially is this true of the earlier period of Modern English. The full forms *kneeled*, *dreamed*, and *leaned* are the only ones found at all in our version of the Bible, or in Shakspeare, or in Milton's poetry. *Lĕapt*, though going back to the Old English period, is far from being as common as *leaped*. The simple verb *reave*, outside of the past participle, is now little used; and the compound *bereave* has almost invariably *bereaved* in the preterite, though *bereft* is occasionally met with. *Cleaved*, moreover, is nearly as common as *cleft*. Full regular forms of some of the others have occasionally made their appearance. On the other hand, both Ben Jonson and Wallis in their grammars give *drĕad* and even *trĕad* as preterites in good use in the seventeenth century, and the latter says that *keeped* and *weeped*, though by no means so common as *kept* and *wept*, were nevertheless employed.

290. The vowel-variation in these words is a development of the later speech. It is unknown to the earliest period of the language. At that time, nearly every one of the above-mentioned verbs that existed in it and was inflected weak had a long vowel in all the principal parts, as the primitive forms show dis-

tinctly. In Anglo-Saxon there were, however, more than a score of verbs of the weak conjugation, in which there was a real variation of vowel in the preterite. Some of these have disappeared from the tongue altogether, others have become perfectly regular. In the following list will be found the verbs of this second class (282) which survive, with their original and transitional forms. Through all periods it will be observed that in the preterite and past participle the termination was added directly to the stem, without an intervening vowel; and as these verbs are constantly confounded by many with those of the strong conjugation, the endings will be distinctly marked.

291. The list comprises the following words: —

1. bringan,	brōh-te,	broh-t.
bringe(n),	brough-te,	brough-t.
bring,	brough-t,	brough-t.
2. bycgan,	boh-te,	boh-t.
buyen,	bough-te,	boh-t.
buy,	bough-t,	bough-t.
3. sēcan,	sōh-te,	sōh-t.
seche(n), seke(n),	sough-te,	sough-t.
seek, be-seech,	sough-t,	sough-t.
4. sellan,	seal-de,	seal-d.
selle(n),	sol-de,	sol-d.
sell,	sol-d,	sol-d.
5. tellan,	teal-de,	teal-d.
telle(n),	tol-de,	tol-d.
tell,	tol-d,	tol-d.

6.	þencan, 'to think,'	þōh-te,	þōht.
	thenke(n),	though-te,	though-t.
	think,	though-t,	though-t.
7.	þyncan, 'to seem,'	þūh-te,	þūh-t.
	(me)thinketh,	(me)though-te.	
	(me)thinks,	(me)though-t.	
8.	wyrcan,	worh-te,	worh-t.
	worche(n),	wrough-te,	wrough-t.
	work,	wrough-t,	wrough-t.

292. To these eight may be added two others: One is *teach*, in which, in Anglo-Saxon, there was no variation of the vowel, though there was the usual change of consonants found in those verbs whose stems terminated in a guttural. The other is *catch*, which comes from the Old French. The following are the forms: —

9.	tǣcan,	tǣh-te,	tǣh-t.
	teche(n),	taugh-te,	taugh-t.
	teach,	taugh-t,	taugh-t.
10.	cacche(n),	cauȝ-te,	cauȝ-t.
	catch,	caugh-t,	caugh-t.

293. To these words may be added two others, — *reach* and *stretch*, — which belonged originally to this same class. In Modern English they have conformed thoroughly to the regular inflection, though in its first period the original one not infrequently appears. The following are the forms these verbs exhibited in Anglo-Saxon and in Early English: —

rǽcean,	rǽhte,	rǽht.
reche(n),	raughte,	raught.
streccean,	streahte,	streaht.
strecche(n),	straughte,	straught.

294. In Shakspeare *raught* occurs four times as a preterite, *reached* not at all; but the participial forms *raught* and *reached* both appear, each once. In other Elizabethan dramatists, also, *raught* occurs not infrequently, though it cannot be found in our version of the Bible. The form *straught* became obsolete much earlier, though it has affected the variant of *distract(ed)* from the Latin *distractus*, causing it to assume the form *distraught*. To the list may also be added the verbs *pitch* and *shriek*, some of whose older and irregular forms made their appearance as late as the seventeenth century. The former in Early English was conjugated as follows: —

picche(n),	pighte,	pight.

The latter as follows: —

shrike(n),	shrighte,	shright.

In both cases the past participle was the form that maintained itself most vigorously.

295. Several of the verbs of this class have developed regular forms alongside of the irregular ones. *Selled* and *telled*, for instance, go back certainly to the fourteenth century, and can be met with in the sixteenth, and perhaps later. During the whole history of Mod-

ern English *catched* and *teached*, which go back to the Old English period, have maintained themselves alongside of *caught* and *taught*, though the present tendency is to regard them as improper. *Beseeched* made its appearance in the sixteenth century, and is still in use, though far less common than *besought*. On the other hand, *worked* has largely displaced *wrought*. Its origin seems to be comparatively late. It was certainly in existence in the seventeenth century,[1] but apparently it was not till the eighteenth that it began to be generally employed.

296. This concludes the consideration of the two general classes of anomalous verbs of the weak conjugation. There remain two verbs which have undergone contractions peculiar to themselves. They are *have* and *make*, and the manner in which the existing forms have been developed out of the preceding ones can be traced in the following scheme: —

habban,	hæfde,	hæfed / gehæfd.
habbe(n) / have(n) / han,	havede / hadde,	haved / had.
have,	had,	had.
macian,	macode,	macod.
make(n),	makede / made,	maked / mad.
make,	made,	made.

The compound *behave* does not, however, follow its

[1] It is mentioned by Wallis in his Grammar.

primitive, but is now inflected regularly; though at one period it formed the preterite *behad.*

297. One other verb remains to be mentioned. This is *clothe*, which has for its original two Anglo-Saxon verbs with the same signification. One is *clāðian*, from which the modern verb has developed its regular inflection; the other *clǣðan*, from whose preterite *clǣðde* came the Early English *cladde* and the Modern English *clad.*

298. There are, furthermore, two participial forms that require consideration. One is the contracted form *dight*, which is now practically all that is left of the Anglo-Saxon verb *dihtan*, 'to set in order,' in Early English *dihte(n)*. The participle belongs rather to poetry than to prose, and it is rarely that any other part of the original verb occurs. The other word is *fraught.* This is the contract past participle of the Early English verb *fraughte(n)*, — unknown to Anglo-Saxon, — which verb in Modern English has been supplanted by its variant *freight.*

299. With the statement that certain verbs ending in *y* change this *y* to *i* in the preterite, as *say, said, pay, paid*, — which is nothing more than an orthographic variation, — the history of all the irregular forms of the weak verbs now existing has been given. It is possible, indeed, that anomalous forms not mentioned here may occasionally be found; but, if so, they are all explainable according to the analogy of the various forms that have been described.

PAST PARTICIPLE OF THE STRONG CONJUGATION.

300. It is the formation of the preterite that constitutes the fundamental distinction between the strong and the weak verb. Still there is an important and well-recognized difference between the terminations of their past participles. Those of the weak verb ended, in the earliest period of English, either in *-d* or *-t*, as they end now; those of the strong during that same period ended in *-en*, except in a few instances where the *e* was syncopated. The past participles of both conjugations agreed, however, in often prefixing the particle *ge*, as is usually the case in German now. Into the later history of this form it is necessary to enter here, on account of the relation it bore to this part of the verb.

301. In the earliest period of the language the particle *ge* was prefixed indifferently to nouns, adjectives, pronouns, adverbs, and verbs. In the case of the adjective we still see a survival of it in the *e* of *enough*, which in Anglo-Saxon was *ge-nōh*, and finally assumed the modern spelling, after passing through various transitional forms, among which were *i-noh*, *i-nouh*, and *i-nough*. There was not, in the case of the verb, any disposition originally to restrict the prefix to the past participle; but this became, in Early English, the prevailing, though not absolutely exclusive, practice. But the particle sometimes suffered a change of form before the Conquest, which change, after the Conquest, became habitual. For *ge*, either *y* or *i* is found from the

twelfth century on; and in the manuscripts these two letters frequently appear as capitals, *Y* or *I*. And not only was this *y* or *i* applied indifferently to participles of the weak or of the strong conjugation, it was applied with equal indifference to those of foreign or native verbs.

302. It was in the employment of this prefix that a marked distinction early showed itself in the speech of different parts of England. The Northern dialect never made use of it to any extent; hardly even at all, except in the writers who directly imitated the language of Chaucer. On the other hand, it was a prevalent, if not the prevailing, practice to add it to the past participle in the dialect of the South. As usual, the literary speech, the language of the Midland, steered a middle course between its two neighbors. During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries it may be said that the influence of the Southern dialect predominated. In the literature of the Midland produced up to the very end of the latter century, participial forms like *ilent*, *ymaked*, *isworn*, *ygo*, 'gone,' *ybe*, 'been,' *ydo*, 'done,' are exceedingly common. After that period, however, the influence of the Northern speech made itself more and more felt in respect to the use, or rather disuse, of this prefix.

303. In the fifteenth century, the employment of *y* or *i* with the participle began to be given up, and in the sixteenth century it practically disappeared. It occasionally made its appearance much later, and even at this day is seen at times in poetry, especially in

burlesque, or in imitations of the archaic style. One noted instance of its employment is found in its addition to the present participle of the verb *point*,[1] in Milton's poem on Shakspeare ; and in the imitations of the archaic style prevalent in Elizabethan English it is occasionally prefixed to various parts of the verb.[2] At the present day *y-clept*, which is the past participle of the obsolete *clepe*, 'to call,' is almost the sole representative of what was once a widely extended usage.

304. But not only in regard to this prefix to the past participle of either conjugation, but in regard to the termination of the strong past participle also, a marked difference between the two extreme dialects of England arose. The speech of the North evinced from the outset a decided inclination to retain the full form *-en ;* while, on the other hand, the speech of the South, while retaining the *e*, was disposed to drop the *-n*. This is a distinction that, roughly speaking, prevailed ; it is not to be insisted upon as one that was invariably observed.

305. The result of these two agencies — the dropping of the prefix *y* or *i* by the Northern dialect, the dropping of the final *-n* by the Southern — was that the past participles of verbs of the strong conjugation showed themselves in two forms in Early English.

[1] Under a star-*ypointing* pyramid. — Line 4.

[2] With gaping jaws, that by no means *ymay*
Be satisfied from hunger of her maw.
SACKVILLE, *Induction to Mirror for Magistrates*, stanza 51.

These are constantly exemplified in the Midland literature of the fourteenth century, and have left everywhere traces of themselves in the development of the modern speech. The difference between these can be best comprehended by an inspection of the following examples: —

Infinitive.	Past Participle, Northern Dialect.	Past Participle, Southern Dialect.
write,	writen,	y-write.
sing,	sungen,	y-sunge.
steal,	stolen,	y-stole.
swear,	sworen,	y-swore.
beat,	beten,	y-bete.

306. The existing past participle of the strong conjugation has in all cases followed the Northern dialect, and rejected the prefix *y*; but in consequence of the difference that prevailed in the representation of the original termination *-en*, that ending came into Modern English with a good deal of variation. These diversities can be arranged under the following heads, though in a few cases the differences are rather orthographical than real. It is, of course, understood that only verbs which have retained the original past participle come here under consideration.

307. (1) Verbs of Class III. (190) have lost the termination *-en* entirely. The apparent exceptions to this rule — *bounden*, *drunken*, *foughten*, *shrunken*, and *sunken*, to which may be added the archaic *holpen* — have already been considered (202). It is only to be added, that at the beginning of the Modern English

period these few full forms were more widely used than at present. This is the only class of strong verbs which showed the disposition to drop this ending entirely, but this it did throughout. The new verbs which were adopted into it, like *ring* and *fling*, abandoned their past participles *rungen* and *flungen* as readily as *sing* and *begin* did *sungen* and *begunnen*.

308. Outside of this class, but two of the original strong verbs can be found which exhibit the tendency to give up the *-en* wholly. One is *shoot*, of Class II., of which the full form *shotten* is obsolete as a participle, and the other is *come*, of Class IV., which has given up *comen* (208). The participial form still retains, indeed, the final *-e* in writing; but in pronunciation the termination has been entirely dropped.

309. (2) Some verbs have retained the termination, though in certain of them the *e* is syncopated; but this is the only contraction they undergo, as they do not drop the *-n*. They come from all classes except the third (190). The following is the list of past participles in which the original ending now rarely or never disappears: —

CLASS I.
1. driven.
2. risen.
3. shriven.
4. smitten.
5. stricken.

CLASS II.
6. flown.

CLASS IV.
7. born(e).
8. shorn.
9. torn.

CLASS V.
10. given.
11. lain.
12. seen.

CLASS VI.	CLASS VII.
13. drawn.	19. blown.
14. forsaken.	20. blown.
15. shaken.	21. fallen.
16. slain.	22. grown.
17. sworn.	23. known.
18. taken.	24. thrown.

To this last class also may be added the archaic *holden*.

310. (3) Between these groups stands a third, which has double forms for the past participle, — one with the ending *-n*, the other without it. A still further distinction might be made in the fact that some words drop *-en* entirely, others drop only *-n*; but this is a distinction existing merely on paper, as this final *-e* is never sounded. The following is the list of verbs which exhibit double forms of the past participle, with the classes to which they belong: —

I.		II.	
1. bite,	bitten, bit.	5. choose,	chosen, chose.
2. ride,	ridden, rid.	6. cleave,	cloven, clove.
3. slide,	slidden, slid.	7. freeze,	frozen, froze.
4. write,	written, writ.	8. seethe,	sodden, sod.

	IV.	13. get,	gotten, got.
9. break,	broken, broke.	14. speak,	spoken, spoke.
10. steal,	stolen, stole.	15. tread,	trodden, trod.
	V.	16. weave,	woven, wove.
11. bid,	bidden, bid.		VII.
12. eat,	eaten, eat.	17. beat,	beaten, beat.

311. This list is true only of the present usage. Even during the Modern English period there are several other verbs — notably *stride* and *smite* — that have exhibited shortened forms besides the full ones. To it may be also added the originally weak verbs *chide* and *hide* (175), which have in the participle the double forms *chidden*, *chid*, and *hidden*, *hid*, respectively. In regard to most of these verbs it is sufficient to say that the full forms are now ordinarily preferred. The shorter ones belong generally to the colloquial rather than to the literary speech. Still no rigid invariable rule can be laid down in regard to the employment of either, and the widest diversity of usage has existed, and still continues to exist, in respect to many of them.

312. In the case of the verbs which have just been considered, it is the original past participle that has

continued to exist, whether in a full or in an abbreviated form. But there are a number of verbs in which this original participle has been discarded entirely. Its place has been supplied in two ways. Just as there were strong verbs in which the form of the participle made its way into the preterite, so also, in a few instances, the form of the preterite made its way into the past participle. The following is the list of verbs in which this transition of the preterite into the participle has occurred, and is still in use; the older forms, when entirely obsolete, are printed in Italics:—

Infinitive.	New Passive Participle.	Old Passive Participle.
hold,	held,	holden.
drink,	drank,	drunk.
sit,	sat,	*sitten*, *sit.*
stand,	stood,	*stonden.*
wake,	woke,	*waken.*
(a)bide,	(a)bode,	*(a)bidden.*
shine,	shone,	*shinen.*

313. It was in the sixteenth century, particularly in the latter part of it, that most of these transitions were effected. The existence of the etymologically correct form *shinen* is perhaps doubtful. At any rate the weak form *shined* was for a time much more common than that of the strong preterite. *Drank*, especially in the last century, threatened to drive out *drunk* entirely; but, though still in good use, the strictly

correct form is coming to be generally preferred. Almost the same statement can be made of *ate*, though this as a participial form has never been as common as *drank*.

314. These words in the list just given are, however, merely the relics of what was once a general movement, which has been almost entirely arrested. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the use of the preterite for the past participle was common in a large number of verbs in which it is no longer seen. The literature of the Elizabethan period, and later, abounds in instances of the use of *rode* for *ridden*, of *forsook* for *forsaken*, of *shook* for *shaken*, of *drove* for *driven*, of *took* for *taken*, and of *wrote* for *written*. There are several other verbs in which a similar use of the preterite occurs with more or less of frequency. In some instances, it looked as if they might displace the regular forms, just as *stood* has driven out the etymologically correct *stonden*. They lasted down frequently to a late period, and are occasionally to be met with now. *Wrote*, for illustration, is very common for *written* in the literature of the eighteenth century, and even *began* for *begun* and *rose* for *risen* can be then found in good use.[1] But though some of these

[1] As examples which might be almost indefinitely increased, the following are given: —

Labienus —
This is stiff news — hath with his Parthian force,
Extended Asia from Euphrates:
His conquering banner *shook* from Syria
To Lydia and to Ionia.
SHAKSPEARE'S *Antony and Cleopatra*, act i. scene 2.

preterites occasionally appear now as participles, the language at the present time is averse to their employment, and is disposed more and more to use exclusively the etymologically correct form (223).

315. In the case of two verbs which belong both to the weak and to the strong conjugation, the place of the strong participle has been taken by the weak. These are *crow* and *cleave*, 'to adhere,' which now present the following forms: —

Infinitive.	Preterite.	Past Participle.
cleave (I.),	cleaved / clave,	cleaved.
crow (VII.),	crew / crowed,	crowed.

The strong participle *crown* is sometimes found in poetry, but the form is archaic.

316. There remain to be brought together a number of verbs at first inflected strong, which, though going over to the weak conjugation, continue still to

[1] How am I *mistook* in you.
Merry Wives of Windsor, act iii. scene 3.

To unfold
What worlds or what vast regions hold
The immortal mind, that hath *forsook*
Her mansion in this fleshly nook.
MILTON, *Il Penseroso*, line 91.

He had *rose* pretty early this morning. — FIELDING, *Joseph Andrews*, I., ch. 16.

Her tears which had long since *began* to wet her handkerchief. — *Ib.*, IV., ch. 11.

retain their original past participle. They have, in consequence, double forms. There are nine of these, as will be seen in the following list: —

1. grave (VI.),	graved,	graved, graven.
2. hew (VII.),	hewed,	hewed, hewn.
3. lade (VI.),	laded,	laded, laden.
4. mow (VII.),	mowed,	mowed, mown.
5. shape (VI.),	shaped,	shaped, shapen.
6. shave (VI.),	shaved,	shaved, shaven.
7. sow (VII.),	sowed,	sowed, sown.
8. swell (III.),	swelled,	swelled, swollen.

To this list belongs, also, the Early English strong verb: —

9. rive (I.),	rived,	rived, riven.

To these may perhaps be properly added *gnaw* and *wax*, which occasionally exhibit the strong participial forms *gnawn* and *waxen* (231). For *bursten*, *carven*, and *molten* see Section 204.

317. It has already been pointed out (246) that the weak verbs *show*, *strew*, and *saw* developed strong past participles which are now in good use, and that

hidden and *chidden* are strong participles formed by adding *-en* to the preterites of weak verbs (175). These forms, which are in their origin corruptions, are now established as correct. They may have come into the language at the outset from the Northern dialect, which, as we have seen, was inclined to retain the full form of the past participle. For not only did the Northern dialect so prefer the termination *-en* as to retain it in the cases where it strictly belonged, it also manifested the disposition to add it to words to which it did not properly belong. Certain weak verbs, such as *cast, cut, put, thrust*, mainly of Scandinavian origin, added the ending *-en* to the weak passive participle, which by contraction had become the same as the infinitive, as it is in Modern English. This produced such forms as *casten, cutten, putten, thrusten* or *throssen*. Of a precisely similar formation is the verbal adjective *boughten*, not infrequent in certain districts of America, and found occasionally in the literature of England.

318. It cannot be said that such forms as these have ever made their way to any extent beyond the dialects in which they originated; but scattered through the whole of Modern English literature are occasional instances of the substitution of a strong participial termination for that of a weak one, usually for the sake of the rhyme. This is true, at least, of its earliest period. The participial forms *sain* for *said*, *bereaven* for *bereaved*, *sweaten* for *sweat(ed)*, *paven* for *paved*, are examples which show the existence of this

tendency, even though the forms have not been adopted.[1] But a most marked instance belongs to the present century. This is the past participle *proven* for *proved*. The word is derived from the French, and like all other foreign verbs has until the present century been inflected, in literary use, according to the weak conjugation throughout. But the strong participial form *proven* has made its way from the Scottish sub-dialect of the Northern dialect into the language of literature, and not only has grown common, but promises to become universally accepted; for it is widely employed by many of the best modern writers, and, in particular, occurs in the prose of Lowell, and frequently in the later poems of Tennyson.

319. Two other participial forms are worthy of attention. The verb *bear* has two forms, *born* and *borne*, of which the latter is the one in general use, while the former is limited to the passive sense of

[1] Both thou, and all the rest of this thy train,
Shall well repent the words which you have *sain*.
GREENE, *Alphonsus*, ed. of 1861, page 231.

Where sense is blind, and wit of wit *bereaven*,
Terror must be our knowledge, fear our skill.
DANIEL, *Civil Wars*, Book I., stanza 123, ed. of 1602.

Grease, that's *sweaten*
From the murderer's gibbet, throw
Into the flame.
SHAKSPEARE, *Macbeth*, act iv. scene 1.

Rise, rise, and heave thy rosy head
From thy coral-*paven* bed.
MILTON, *Comus*, line 886.

'brought forth.' This distinction between the two did not become accepted till towards the end of the last century. In the early period of Modern English *lie* had also a past participle *lien* along with *lain;* but this no longer exists save in poetry, and even in that is rare.

PAST PARTICIPLE OF THE WEAK CONJUGATION.

320. The past participle of weak verbs was formed in the primitive Indo-European by adding to the stem the suffix *ta*. Of this the consonant appeared in the early Teutonic tongues as *th*, *t*, or *d*. In Anglo-Saxon it was *d*; and, as the vowel of the suffix had disappeared, it was *d* only that was added. This was joined on directly to the connective *o* of the second weak conjugation, as *luf-o-d*, 'loved'; or to the connective *e* of the first weak conjugation, as *dēm-e-d*, 'deemed.' But sometimes this connective *e* was dropped, in which case *d* often became *t*. In general, also, the history of the past participle of the weak conjugation is, since the fifteenth century, the same as the history of the preterite, when the dropping of the final *-e* by that part of the verb brought about in them both identity of form. The former was consequently subjected to precisely the same changes that befell the latter. To this there is one slight exception.

321. Either after the analogy of verbs whose past participle is precisely the same in form as the present tense, as *hit, hurt,* or because they were made to re-

semble their Latin primitives, a number of verbs in the Middle English period did not always add *-d* to form the past participle; as *consummate* (Lat. *consummat-us*) for *consummated*, *create* (Lat. *creat-us*) for *created*, *pollute* (Lat. *pollut-us*) for *polluted*. These forms without final *-d* belong mostly to words that are derived from Latin verbs of the first conjugation; but they are not limited to them. The usage extended down to the Modern English period, and can hardly be said to have been abandoned before the end of the seventeenth century. Certain writers are remarkable for their fondness for such forms. As a general rule, they are employed in an adjectival sense; but even then their participial character is plainly apparent. The participial adjective *situate* for *situated*, common in legal phraseology, is a survival of this usage.

NUMBER AND PERSON.

322. As regards the three primitive numbers, the Gothic was the only one of the Teutonic languages that retained the dual of the verb; but, even in that, it was confined to the first and second persons. At the time that language was committed to writing, the third had disappeared; and, in order to say that "they two" had done anything, the plural form had to be used. In English the verb, through all the stages of its history, knows only of the singular and plural numbers: no trace of a dual appears in its earliest monuments.

323. A commonly received theory as to the origin of the personal endings is, that the personal pronoun,

as the subject of a verb, was originally placed after it, and not before it, as now; just as if we, instead of saying *I hate, they hate,* should say, *hate I, hate they,* and so on for the other persons. According to this theory the pronouns, appended to the stem of the verb, gradually united with it so as to form one word; as even in Early English, for illustration, *thinkest thou* or *sayest thou* often appears as one word, *thinkestow, seistow.* Thus joined to the verb, they came at last to be regarded as an inseparable part of it, as really belonging to it. Then they were used to form the inflection of the tense; but as the personal pronouns originally appended to the persons to denote the subject were different, the endings were, at first, necessarily different in all cases.

324. When these pronouns had become so thoroughly united with the verb as to form one word, the recollection of their original pronominal character was certain in time to pass away. They came to be looked upon simply as an integral part of the inflection of the verb, and not as separate words or syllables denoting the subject. As this feeling grew predominant, a personal pronoun was frequently put before the verb as its subject. This naturally became more and more common as the sense of the original pronominal nature of the personal ending became fainter and fainter. When it had become a constant practice to employ the personal pronoun as the subject of the verb, and usually preceding it, the necessity of an ending to denote the person was gone; that was denoted by

the personal pronoun which was the subject. The value of distinct terminations for the persons was accordingly destroyed.

325. If the theory be true, it was inevitable that under such circumstances the terminations should be confounded, and, if much confounded, that many of them in course of time should disappear. This has been fully exemplified in the history of the Teutonic languages, and of our own in particular. In Gothic there is a distinct termination for each of the three persons of the plural of the present indicative, — *-m* for the first person, *-th* for the second, and *-nd* for the third. In Anglo-Saxon this diversity of endings had been given up in this number of this tense. The terminations of the first and third persons had been entirely abandoned, and *-th*, the termination of the second person, had become the common termination of the three.

326. The result was just as marked in the case of the present subjunctive. In this mode the Gothic still preserved the distinction of the various persons by the endings. In the Anglo-Saxon, however, while there was a distinction of form between the singular and the plural, the three persons of the singular had all the same termination, as had likewise the three persons of the plural the same. A similar statement can be made about the plural of the preterite. Here the older tongue, the Gothic, still preserved the distinction of persons by the endings, while in Anglo-Saxon but one of these original endings survived.

This was strictly the termination of the third person, which was extended to the other two. But barren of these endings as is our earliest speech when compared with the Gothic, it is rich when compared with what we have to-day. The history of the tenses will show the steady loss in this respect that has overtaken the inflection.

TENSES OF THE VERB.

327. The English, like all the Teutonic tongues, has but two simple tenses, — the present and the preterite. About them as centres have been developed verb-phrases which express the ideas and relations conveyed by the inflectional forms to be found in other languages. The use of these two tenses is far more limited in Modern English than it was in the ancient speech. The present then generally expressed also the ideas for which we now use, not merely the future but the future perfect; while the preterite denoted what is now conveyed by the imperfect, the perfect, and the pluperfect. These forms have, moreover, undergone changes so various, that it will be necessary to consider each one of the two simple tenses by itself.

THE PRESENT TENSE, INDICATIVE AND SUBJUNCTIVE.

328. The following paradigms of the strong verb *singan*, 'to sing,' and of the verbs *dēman*, 'to judge,' and *erian*, 'to plough,' of the first weak conjugation, and *lōcian*, 'to look,' of the second, will show the

inflection of the present indicative and subjunctive in the Anglo-Saxon period.

329.

Singular.	Indicative.	Subjunctive.	Indicative.	Subjunctive.
1. *ic*	sing-e,	sing-e,	dēm-e,	dēm-e,
2. *þū*	sing-est,	sing-e,	dēm-est,	dēm-e,
3. *hē*	sing-eð.	sing-e.	dēm-eð.	dēm-e.
Plural.				
1. *wē* 2. *gē* 3. *hī*	sing-að.	sing-en.	dēm-að.	dēm-en.

Singular.	Indicative.	Subjunctive.	Indicative.	Subjunctive.
1. *ic*	lōc-ie,	lōc-ie,	er-ie,	er-ie,
2. *þū*	lōc-ast,	lōc-ie,	er-est,	er-ie,
3. *hē*	lōc-að.	lōc-ie.	er-eð.	er-ie.
Plural.				
1. *wē* 2. *gē* 3. *hī*	lōc-iað.	lōc-ien.	er-iað.	er-ien.

330. In these paradigms it will be seen that the stem of the strong verb *singan* is *sing;* that the connective is *a* weakened to *e* in the singular of the indicative and in both numbers of the subjunctive; and that the personal endings, so far as they have preserved, are *-st* of the second, and *-ð* of the third person singular, *-ð* of the plural indicative, and *-n* of the plural subjunctive. Most verbs of the first weak conjugation do not differ here from the strong verb in

their inflection. In the second weak conjugation it will be noticed that the place of the connective *o* has been taken by the connective *ia*, which, however, is only seen pure in the plural indicative.

331. This is the common inflection in the Anglo-Saxon, as it is exhibited in the classical dialect, the West-Saxon. But, after the Norman Conquest, the present tense of the verb exhibited marked differences in the three great dialects of the English speech, that arose and developed literatures of their own during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. These differences are most marked in the plural number. If we represent the present tense of *singen* as it would be inflected in each of these dialects, we should have displayed the following forms: —

Singular.	Southern.	Midland (East).	Northern. 1st Form.	Northern. 2d Form.
I	sing-e,	sing-e,	sing,	sing-e(s),
Thou	sing-est,	sing-est,	sing-es,	sing-es,
He	sing-eth.	sing-eth.	sing-es.	sing-es.
Plural.				
Ili or *They*	sing-eth.	sing-en.	sing.	sing-es.

What is true of *singen* is also true of verbs of the weak conjugation.

332. It is evident at a glance that the Southern forms are much nearer the classic Anglo-Saxon than either of the others; and that the Midland are precisely the same as the Southern in the singular number. As regards the Northern, it is to be remarked

that the forms in *-s* go back to a period before the Conquest, although the scantiness of Northumbrian literature, and the uncertainty attending the date of composition of the little that has been preserved, make positive statements hazardous as to the time of the transition of the final *-ð* into *-s*, or the extent of usage of the latter.

333. It will be observed, however, that there are two sets of Northern forms. One of these, though going back to the thirteenth century, is far nearer Modern English than either of those found in the Midland or the South. In general, it may be said of the two, that, when the verb has for its subject a personal pronoun directly preceding it, it uses the first form; but in other cases the forms in *-s* are usually though not invariably found. In consequence, in the Northern English of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, *they think* and *men think* would ordinarily be represented by *thei think* and *men thinkes;* and this is still a peculiarity of the Scotch dialect.

334. It is the Midland form, however, that has been the ruling one in Modern English. It has, it is true, been seriously affected by the two dialects bordering upon it. During the Early English period the influence of each one of the three upon the one nearest it was plainly perceptible. The Eastern Midland has not unfrequently the plural ending *-th*, and even occasionally the Northern third person singular in *-s*. This latter form was far more common in the West Midland division of the Midland dialect, upon which

the speech of the North exerted in certain details a powerful influence. But the later history of these forms will be confined to the history of the present tense of the East Midland dialect.

335. We begin with the first person of the singular. Even in the earliest period this had usually dropped the personal ending. The connective *e*, which had consequently become the termination, was also given up in the Middle English period. In this, the Northern dialect preceded the Midland, and, doubtless, largely influenced it. This ending *-e* really disappeared from all verbs; but it was retained in the spelling of many, though never sounded in pronunciation, as in *love* and *give;* and this has continued the practice down to the present time. The Northern dialect also added *-s* at times to the first person, probably from a false analogy with the other persons, which all had this ending. This occasionally appears in English literature as late as the sixteenth century, though in many cases it is hard to tell whether the termination was due to design or to typographical error.

336. The second person, through all the periods of English, outside of the distinctively Northern dialect, has regularly ended in *-st*, and there has never been a time when the supremacy of this termination has been seriously shaken. Still, the form in *-s* appeared even in West-Saxon, and after the Norman Conquest it was the regular ending of the Northern dialect. As late as the Elizabethan period, this same

form will be found occasionally alongside of *-st*, as can be seen in the following examples: —

> Thou art not thyself;
> For thou *exists* on many a thousand grains
> That issue out of dust.
>
> SHAKSPEARE, *Measure for Measure*, act iii. scene 1.
>
> My sharpness thou no less *disjoints*.
>
> JONSON, *Epigram* 58.

But in such cases the final *t* was almost always dropped, in order to avoid the crowding together of numerous consonants, caused by the previous dropping of the connective *e*. In the examples above given, the full forms would be *exist-e-st, disjoint-e-st.*

337. The suffix *-ð* of the third person singular was in the Anglo-Saxon period frequently changed into *-s* in the North of England; and, in the works still extant in the Northumbrian dialect, forms in *-ð* and *-s* stand side by side. By the thirteenth century, however, the latter had completely supplanted the former in this division of English speech. Outside of it, the ending *-th* was regularly employed, not only during the Old English, but during the Middle English, period. Chaucer almost invariably has the third person singular terminating in *-th*, except when he designedly represents the dialect of the North. The very few instances in which he otherwise has the ending *-s* (as in "The Boke of the Duchesse," line 257) are due to the necessity of rhyme.[1]

[1] Instances occur, however, in the East Midland dialect, in which the forms in *-s* are found where the necessity of rhyme cannot be

338. But in the sixteenth century the termination in *-s* gradually made its way from the Northern dialect into the language of literature. After the middle of that century, it became with each succeeding year more common. For about a hundred years, the forms in *-s* and *-th* lasted side by side with apparently little general difference in their usage. Books and writers naturally varied. The authorized version of the English Bible does not employ the third person singular in *-s*. Ben Jonson does not even mention it in his grammar, although it is of constant occurrence in his writings. But, by the middle of the seventeenth century, the form in *-s* had become the prevailing one, and has since that time become nearly the exclusive one. It is the English Bible that has kept alive the form in *-th;* but it is rarely employed now, save in poetry and in the solemn style. During the eighteenth century occasional efforts were made to revive it, and the form *hath* in particular was frequently employed instead of *has*. But the practice did not continue.

339. The Midland plural *-en* is of uncertain origin. By some it is regarded as being nothing more than an intrusion of the subjunctive ending *-en* into the indicative, helped by the fact that this same termination was also that of the preterite. To whatever due, it was a

alleged, as in the following extracts from LANGLAND'S *Vision of Piers Plowman*, Text B: —

And as his loresman *leres* hym, bileueth and troweth.
Passus xii., 183.

Thus the poete *preues* that the pecok for his fetheres is reuerenced.
Passus xii., 260.

distinctive characteristic of the Midland dialect, and showed itself as early as the end of the twelfth century. The Southern speech, as has been seen, varied little from the classic Anglo-Saxon, and formed its plural in *-eth*, the connection *a* or *ia* of the latter having in all cases become *e* in the former. The Northern, having often changed the *-að* into *-as* before the Norman Conquest, adopted after that event the form *-es* or *-s* exclusively, or dropped the termination altogether. These three terminations of the plural lasted side by side for centuries; and, though strictly denoting different dialects, they were to some extent interchanged. As a result, there are but few old English and still fewer Middle English manuscripts in which at least two forms are not represented, though one is naturally much more common than the other.

340. It is from the Midland form in *-en*, however, that the Modern English has strictly been derived. Still it is evident that the Northern forms, existing as early as the thirteenth century, without any terminations at all, must have had great influence in bringing about the result we now see. The *-n* began to be widely dropped, even early in the Middle English period; and this in time was followed by the abandonment of *-e* in most cases. *Tellen*, for example, became *telle*, then *tell*. The vowel naturally disappeared first in pronunciation; and its disuse in pronunciation was generally, though not invariably, followed by its disuse in orthography. The dropping of the *-n* and the dropping or retention in the spelling of the *-e*, caused

all the persons of the plural to assume the same sound and form as the infinitive and the first person of the singular. It has already been stated[1] that, according to Ben Jonson, this *-en* was employed until the time of Henry VIII. "But now," he adds, "whatsoever is the cause, it hath quite grown out of use, and that other so generally prevailed, that I dare not presume to set this afoot again; albeit, to tell you my opinion, I am persuaded that the lack hereof, well considered, will be found a great blemish to our tongue."

341. The termination *-en* is occasionally found through the whole of the sixteenth century; but it appears as an avowed archaism, not as a form in constant and current use. It is, therefore, limited to the language of poetry. In the latter part of this century, a great impulse was given to its employment by the practice and authority of Spenser, who introduced it largely into his writings. In this custom he was followed for a time by no small number of admirers and imitators. By the middle of the seventeenth century it had, however, disappeared almost entirely from literature of any kind. It was regularly revived in the numerous imitations of Spenser that were produced in the eighteenth century, such, for instance, as Thomson's "Castle of Indolence" (A.D. 1748). As a natural result, it was often misused, — a fate which had occasionally befallen it in the sixteenth century. Even then we find it sometimes appended to the first person, producing such forms as *I loven*, *I passen*, — forms

[1] See page 152.

which have never been actually used by anybody in any period. Errors of this kind, however, were altogether more frequent in the eighteenth century.

342. The Northern plural in *-s* lasted in reality to a much later date than the Midland form in *-en*. In the prose literature of the sixteenth century it is far from uncommon, and it can be found even later, in the seventeenth. These statements are especially true of the third person; the first and second with this ending are by no means frequent, though occasionally found. But there are more than two hundred plurals in *-s* to be met with in Shakspeare's plays, though these are changed wherever possible in modern texts, and can only be found by consulting the original editions. In some instances the metre has required their retention;[1] in others the rhyme, as in the following song from the third scene of the second act of "Cymbeline": —

> Hark! hark! the lark at heaven's gate sings,
> And Phœbus gins arise,
> His steeds to water at those springs
> On chalic'd flowers that *lies*.

The plural in *-s* is by no means confined to Shakspeare, however, but is in fairly frequent, though hardly what can be called general, employment during the whole Elizabethan period. By the middle of the seventeenth century, however, it had gone out of literary use. The language of low life, however, retains to some extent this form to the present day.

[1] See page 129.

343. The Southern plural in *-th* was never so common as the Northern in *-s*, but, so far as literature is concerned, may be said to have lasted somewhat later. With the writers of the Elizabethan period it is largely confined to the two forms *doth* and *hath*, which occur, however, with a good deal of frequency, though, as in the case of the Northern forms, they are usually made in modern editions to conform to modern grammar. Specimens of the usage can be seen in the following extracts: —

> Ladies and tyrants never laws *respecteth*.
> DANIEL, *Delia*, Sonnet xxxi. (early editions).

> By it *doth* grow
> About the sides all herbs which wretches use,
> All simples good for medicine or abuse.
> FLETCHER, *Faithful Shepherdess*, act ii. scene 3.

344. In Anglo-Saxon a contracted form existed in the second and third persons of the present singular, confined to verbs whose stems ended in *-d*, *-t*, or *-s*. It is exemplified in the following paradigm of *rīdan*, 'to ride': —

1. *ic* rīd-e,
2. *þū* rīd-est, *or* rīst,
3. *hē* rīd-eð, *or* rīt.

These contract forms, especially in the third person, lasted long after the Conquest. Through the whole of the Old and Middle English periods they are constantly to be met with, as *bit* from *biddeth*, *rit*

from *rideth*, *sit* from *sitteth*, *rist* from *riseth*, *glit* from *glideth*, *stant* from *stardeth*. By the beginning of the Modern English period, the full forms had generally taken their place; or perhaps it would be better to say they were displaced by the form ending in *-s*. The verb *list*, meaning 'please,' still continues to show in the modern language the contracted form *list*, along with the forms *listeth* or *lists*.

345. It is hardly necessary to say that, in all the early periods of the language, there are many variations from the forms that have been here given. The connective *e* is often syncopated; it is replaced often by *y* or *i*; the *-th* of the endings frequently appears as *-t* or *-d*; and numerous other variations could be mentioned which need here no more than a general reference, as they have had no influence upon the forms existing in the modern speech.

346. The history of the present subjunctive forms is essentially the same as of those of the indicative. As in the Midland dialect, both possessed in the plural the same ending *-en*, all that has been said of that number of the latter will also apply to the former. The disappearance of the *-n* from both modes took place at the same time, as did also the disappearance of the *-e* in those cases where it was dropped from the spelling at all. It is only in the second and third persons of the singular that the subjunctive forms differ at all from those of the indicative; and the second person is so little employed, that now the only marked difference of inflection is in the third person.

It is mainly owing to these two modes assuming almost the same inflections throughout that the distinct shades of thought once expressed by the subjunctive, as contrasted with the indicative, have practically disappeared. To denote these, the language is now obliged to resort to other methods, the discussion of which belongs to syntax exclusively.

THE PRETERITE.

347. As it is the method of forming the preterite which constitutes the fundamental distinction between the weak verb and the strong, it is important to give several examples of the inflections of this tense. As, furthermore, the inflection of the weak preterite is not only simpler than that of the strong, but has also influenced the latter in the ending of the second person singular, it is the one that will be first considered.

THE PRETERITE OF THE WEAK CONJUGATION.

348. For the purpose of exhibiting the inflection of the weak preterite, the verbs *dēman*, 'to deem,' and *erian*, 'to plough,' of the first conjugation, will be taken and *lōcian* of the second. The following are the paradigms: —

Singular.	Indicative.	Subjunctive.	Indicative.	Subjunctive.
1. *ic*	dēm-de,	dēm-de,	er-e-de,	er-e-de,
2. *þū*	dēm-dest,	dēm-de,	er-e-dest,	er-e-de,
3. *hē*	dēm-de.	dēm-de.	er-e-de.	er-e-de.
Plural.				
1. *wē*				
2. *gē*	dēm-don.	dēm-den.	er-e-don.	er-e-den.
3. *hī*				

Singular.	Indicative.	Subjunctive.
1. *ic*	lōc-o-de,	lōc-o-de,
2. *þū*	lōc-o-dest,	lōc-o-de,
3. *hē*	lōc-o-de.	lōc-o-de.
Plural.		
1. *wē* 2. *gē* 3. *hī*	lōc-o-don.	lōc-o-den.

349. As has been previously pointed out (255), *e* became the general connective of all these verbs in Early English. Furthermore, the forms of the indicative and subjunctive plural were assimilated by the weakening of the indicative ending *-on* to *-en*. Then followed one additional modification. The final *-n* of the plural was frequently dropped, even as early as the twelfth century; and this practice became more and more common in the centuries which followed. By the beginning of the Middle English period it was the usual, though not invariable, practice in the Midland dialect. Hence in it the inflection of these same verbs regularly assumed, at that time, the following form for the indicative: —

Singular.	Singular.	Singular.
dem-e-de,	er-e-de,	lok-e-de,
dem-e-dest,	er-e-dest,	lok-e-dest,
dem-e-de.	er-e-de.	lok-e-de.
Plural.	Plural.	Plural.
dem-e-de(n).	er-e-de(n).	lok-e-de(n).

350. In the fourteenth century also, in this same Midland dialect, the final *-e* of the singular was more

often neglected than retained in the pronunciation. The disuse of it in pronunciation led to its abandonment in the spelling. In the fifteenth century it disappeared entirely, as a rule, leaving the forms as they are now seen, though the failure to treat the *-ed* as a separate syllable did not become the general practice till later. This same state of things is true of the preterite plural, after it had discarded the final *-n*, and also of the subjunctive forms. In this sloughing off of the endings, the Northern dialect had, as usual, taken the lead. As early as the thirteenth century, it not merely showed occasional instances of such forms, as *demed* and *loked* instead of *demede*, *demeden*, and *lokede*, *lokeden;* they were even then the regular rule.

THE PRETERITE OF THE STRONG CONJUGATION.

351. Of the Anglo-Saxon strong verbs the inflection of the preterite of *singan*, 'to sing,' of *drīfan*, 'to drive,' of *forsacan*, 'to forsake,' and of *grōwan*, 'to grow,' will be given. The following are the paradigms: —

Singular.	Indicative.	Subjunctive.	Indicative.	Subjunctive.
1. *ic*	sang,	sung-e,	drāf,	drif-e,
2. *þū*	sung-e,	sung-e,	drif-e,	drif-e,
3. *hē*	sang.	sung-e.	drāf.	drif-e.
Plural.				
1. *wē* 2. *gē* 3. *hī*	sung-on.	sung-en.	drif-on.	drif-en.

Singular.	Indicative.	Subjunctive.	Indicative.	Subjunctive.
1. *ic*	forsōc,	forsōc-e,	grēow,	grēow-e,
2. *þū*	forsōc-e,	forsōc-e,	grēow-e,	grēow-e,
3. *hē*	forsōc.	forsōc-e.	grēow.	grēow-e.
Plural.				
1. *wē* 2. *gē* 3. *hī*	forsōc-on.	forsōc-en.	grēow-on.	grēow-en.

352. There are four things to be especially noted in the Anglo-Saxon inflection: —.

1. The personal endings have entirely disappeared from the first and third persons of the singular of the indicative.

2. The termination of the second person singular of the indicative is not *-st*, as in the weak preterite, but is *-e*.

3. The vowel of the second person singular is precisely the same as the vowel of all the persons of the plural indicative, and of all the persons of both numbers of the subjunctive.

4. In the preterite of all the strong verbs represented by *singan* and *drīfan*, the vowel of the first and third persons of the indicative singular is different from that of the second person of the same number, and from the vowel of all the persons of the plural and of both numbers of the subjunctive.

353. In certain particulars the later history of the inflections just given is the same as that of the preterite of the weak conjugation. There was the same

weakening of the ending *-on* into *-en*, and the consequent assimilation of the plurals of the indicative and the subjunctive. There was the same dropping of the final *-n*, to be followed afterward by the dropping of the final *-e*. As the history of the subjunctive is here, as in the present tense, involved in that of the indicative, it may be disregarded; and the indicative preterites of the four verbs may be placed side by side, as they appeared in Early English.

Singular.	Singular.	Singular.	Singular.
1. sang,	drof,	forsok,	grew,
2. sung(e),	driv(e),	forsok(e),	grew(e),
3. sang.	drof.	forsok.	grew.
Plural.	Plural.	Plural.	Plural.
1. 2. 3. sunge(n).	drive(n).	forsoke(n).	grewe(n).

354. The forms here given are those of an inflection theoretically correct, rather than the ones invariably employed. The variations are, in fact, exceedingly numerous. In the second person singular, the tendency toward uniformity began to make itself felt in the latter part of the fourteenth century; and the *-est* or *-st* of the weak conjugation was sometimes substituted for the *-e* of the strong, so that *sunge*, for illustration, was replaced by *sang(e)st* or *sung(e)st*. In the fifteenth century this became the established practice. It is the distinction, however, between the vowel of the first and third persons of the indicative singular and that of all the persons of the plural,

which is of most importance in the later history of the strong preterite. To this is due mainly the existence of the different forms which have prevailed, and to some extent continue to prevail still.

355. Of the seventy-eight Anglo-Saxon strong verbs, which, as we have seen (241), have lasted down to our time, nineteen represented in the paradigms given above by *forsōc*, 'forsook,' and *grēow*, 'grew,' do not exhibit this peculiarity; but the remaining fifty-nine all possessed it, and in many instances transmitted it to later English. With the inflection before us, the origin of the varying forms that have been or are in use can easily be traced. Let us take, for illustration, the history of the preterite of the Anglo-Saxon verb *singan*, 'to sing'; for the comprehension of the development of one verb involves that of all.

356. In the earliest period of English, when one wished to say *I sang*, or *sung*, he used the form *ic sang;* when he wished to say *we sang*, or *sung*, he used the expression *we sungon*. The plural preterite differed from the singular by having a termination *-on*, and by change of vowel. After the break-up of Anglo-Saxon, the first thing to be affected was this ending *-on*. In accordance with the principle already so often stated, the vowel *o* was weakened into *e*, and *sungon* became *sungen*. But, along with this weakening of the vowel, there was also a tendency to drop the final *-n*, and *sungen* became *sunge*. The next steps were to drop the final *-e* in pronunciation, and then in writing; and we have, in consequence, for the

preterite plural, the form *sung*. Hence there remained, as a result, two forms for the preterite, — one for the singular and one for the plural, — differing from each other only by a single letter, and that letter a vowel.

357. It was inevitable that a distinction seemingly arbitrary, and serving no useful purpose, should break down; and this was what happened. The confusion that soon arose in the usage of an uneducated people, would be materially increased by the fact that the second person of the singular, then much more widely employed than at present, had a form different from that of the first and third persons. After the endings had been dropped, it was impossible that these distinctions should be permanently preserved. They were doubtless kept up by individuals long after they had disappeared from the language of the great mass of men. To say *I sang* and *we sung* was, probably, vaguely felt by many, and loudly maintained by some, to be the only correct usage; even when, in the ordinary speech, men had become accustomed to say indifferently, *I sang* and *we sang*, or *I sung* and *we sung*.

358. In particular verbs, also, the distinction lasted much later than it did in others. On this point the scansion of the verse makes it clear that dissyllabic, that is, plural, forms of certain preterites were required when the subject was in the plural, and monosyllabic ones when the subject was in the singular. An examination of the best manuscripts of Chaucer's poetry leaves little doubt, that, with him, *gan* was regularly the sin-

gular of the preterite ; *gunnen, gunne,* or *gonnen, gonne,* the plural.[1] The same statement may be made as to his use of *shal,* 'shall,' and *shullen* or *shulle.* The exceptions to such use, by him, of this tense of these two particular words are very rare, if they can be fairly deemed to exist at all. Still in his time the distinction between the singular and the plural of the preterite of most verbs had broken down generally, and the forms originally belonging to one number were used for both. Not unfrequently, both forms were used indifferently and interchangeably. Hence arose a double set of preterites, such as *drank* and *drunk, began* and *begun, sprang* and *sprung, rode* and *rid, wrote* and *writ,* which have been transmitted to Modern English.

359. These double preterites were far more numerous in the Middle English period and at the beginning of Modern English than they are now. The tendency of the language has been steadily to reduce their number. Many forms, which, even in the early period of Modern English, were in good use, have now disappeared altogether, or are heard only in the language of poetry or of low life. Ben Jonson, in his grammar, gives lists of verbs that had two different forms for the preterite in his time ; and, in a large proportion of them, one form is now obsolete or antiquated. Attention has already been called

[1] It was ten of the clokke he *gan* conclude.
Prologue to *Man of Law's Tale,* line 14.

Til that the coles *gonne* faste brenne.
Canon's Yeoman's Tale, line 181.

to a number of these belonging to Class I. (168), of which this statement is particularly true. But Jonson also gives to *climb*, of Class III., the two preterites *clomb* and *climb;* to *fling*, the preterites *flang* and *flung;* to *swing*, the preterites *swang* and *swung;* to *wring*, the preterites *wrang* and *wrung*, and, in like manner, double forms to many others.

360. In the majority of cases in which the verb reached the Modern English period with two preterites, one form came from the original singular and one from the original plural. This we have just seen exemplified in the case of *sang* and *sung*. The language shows, however, an increasing aversion to the retention of these double forms. They have been steadily lessening from the sixteenth century to the present time, and, from present indications, are destined ultimately to disappear, at least from common usage. Yet there remain a number of verbs which continue to have two forms for the preterite. They all belong to the third or the first class, and are given in the following list, with the Anglo-Saxon originals added in parentheses.

Infinitive.	Form from the Singular.	Form from the Plural.
drink,	drank (*dranc*),	drunk (*drunc-on*).
(be)gin,	-gan (*gan*),	-gun (*gunn-on*).
shrink,	shrank (*scranc*),	shrunk (*scrunc-on*).
sing,	sang (*sang*),	sung (*sung-on*).
sink,	sank (*sanc*),	sunk (*sunc-on*).
slink,	slank (*slanc*),	slunk (*slunc-on*).

Infinitive.	Form from the Singular.	Form from the Plural.
spring,	sprang (*sprang*),	sprung (*sprung-on*).
stink,	stank (*stanc*),	stunk (*stunc-on*).
swim,	swam (*swam*),	swum (*swumm-on*).
ride,	rode (*rād*),	rid (*rid-on*).
write,	wrote (*wrāt*),	writ (*writ-on*).

361. *Ring*, when it went over to the strong conjugation in the Old English period, followed the example of *sing*, and developed *rang* and *rung*. To this list, moreover, may be added *bid* and *eat*, of Class V., which have double forms in use, though but one is derived from the original preterite. In the case of *eat*, the vowel-sound of the preterite is sometimes long, as in *āte*, sometimes short, as in *ĕat;* in the latter, the barbarous spelling, as not unusual, gives no clew to the pronunciation.

362. The history of the use of the double forms just given, as well as of those no longer found, makes it clear that there has been a steadily growing preference, especially in late Modern English, for the employment of the forms derived from the singular. *Drunk* has never been so common as *drank*, and the same thing may be said, though in a far less degree, of *begun* as compared with *began*. But in the case of the two verbs of Class I., *ride* and *write*, the forms *rid* and *writ*, once frequently met with, are now almost entirely limited to the language of poetry, and are comparatively rare in that. During the last century

the forms from the plural in the list given above were in most instances decidedly more common than those derived from the singular. The reverse is true of the present century. For illustration, Pope (1688–1744), in his poetical works at least, invariably uses *rung*, *sung*, *sunk*, and *sprung*, never *rang*, *sang*, *sank*, and *sprang*. Furthermore, he has *writ* as a preterite nine times, while he so uses *wrote* but once. On the other hand, the usage of Tennyson is precisely opposite. With him the forms from the plural are far less common than those from the singular, and in the case of some verbs are never met with at all.[1] The usage of the representative poets of the two periods may be taken as fairly representing the change which has come over English usage in this particular respect.

363. To what is this change due? In spite of the present tendency to employ forms derived from the singular, it is evident that there was a time when there prevailed a preference for those derived from the plural. This is especially the case with the verbs of Class III. (190), which have been the ones mainly under consideration. In these, the following forms derived from the plural are now exclusively in use: —

[1] This statement is based upon the Concordance to Tennyson's poetry, which, however, comes down no later than 1869. According to it, Tennyson, up to that time, had used *rang* as a preterite 20 times, *sang* 44 times, *sprang* 10, *swam* 3, and *began* 12, against *rung* 3, *sung* 11, and *sprung*, *swum*, and *begun*, each once. He had also used *drank* 13 times, *shrank* 3 times, and *sank* 20 times, against no instances of *drunk*, *shrunk*, and *sunk*. In the case of Pope, the translation of Homer is excluded.

1. bind, bound (*bund-on*).
2. cling, clung (*clung-on*).
3. fight, fought (*fuht-on*).
4. grind, ground (*grund-on*).
5. sling, slung (*slung-on*).
6. spin, spun (*spunn-on*).
7. sting, stung (*stung-on*).
8. swing, swung (*swung-on*).
9. win, won (*wunn-on*).
10. wind, wound (*wund-on*).
11. wring, wrung (*wrung-on*)

364. The general preference for forms from the plural of certain verbs, especially in the earlier period of Modern English, was largely due to the influence of the past participle. In the case of verbs belonging to the first and third classes, these two parts of the inflection were almost the same in Anglo-Saxon. In Early English they came to be exactly the same. Let us take the verb *wrītan*, of Class I., and *singan*, of Class III., as exemplifying the processes which brought about identity of form. The preterite plural of the first is *writon*, the past participle is *writen;* of the second, the corresponding parts are *sungon* and *sungen*. Consequently the only difference in each case between the two forms is in the vowel of the unaccented final syllable. When *o* of the preterite plural was weakened to *e*, even this slight distinction disappeared. *Writen* and *sungen* served equally for the two parts under consideration. As the *-n* and the *-e* successively fell away, it followed that the regular form for the past participle, and one of the two forms of the preterite, would come to be *writ* and *sung*. Such they actually were.

365. At this point the influence of verbs of the

weak conjugation came into play. In that conjugation the preterite and the past participle had now assumed precisely the same form. Accordingly, the influence of this inflection was insensibly brought to bear upon these strong verbs, so as to make them conform in this respect to the practice of the vast majority of verbs in the language. It was natural, therefore, that the plural should, as a rule, be chosen, when the selection was limited to one form. This was the cause that has led to its exclusive or equal adoption in twenty-eight verbs of Class III., which still exist in our tongue. The only exception, indeed, is in the case of *run;* and this was doubtless due to the fact that the vowel *u* had made its way into the present, where it had no right; and so, instead of *rin*, that form became *run;* and, to distinguish the preterite from the present, the vowel of the singular was chosen. Yet even here in popular speech *run* is sometimes found as the preterite; and from the popular speech it has occasionally made its way into literature (200). It is expressly mentioned by Ben Jonson as being in use in his time.

366. The influence of the past participle in determining the choice of the plural as the form for the modern preterite was neither so thoroughgoing nor so permanent in the verbs of Class I. (167). This was due to the fact that in those of them which have been transmitted to Modern English, the original participle has either been dropped entirely or the full form of it with the ending *-en* retained. In the one case it

has come to have the same form as the preterite, as in *abode* and *shone;* in the other the retention of its full form makes the past participle so distinct from the preterite that the two parts could never be confounded or assimilated.

367. This preference for forms from the plural of the preterite belongs, it has been said, to the earlier period of Modern English. But in the latter half of this period, especially within the past hundred years, the language has largely given up the disposition to assimilate the preterites and past participles of verbs of the strong conjugation. On the contrary, it evinces a decided disposition to distinguish them whenever practicable. One evidence of this has already been furnished in contrasting the practice of Pope and of Tennyson in the use of the preterites of *ring*, *sing*, *sink*, and *spring* (362). It is by no means impossible that other forms from the preterite singular, such as *span*, *swang*, and *wan*, may, in process of time, be introduced into the literary speech. We see this tendency much more plainly manifested, however, in the increasing disposition to discard even from colloquial usage certain shortened forms of the past participle, where they are identical with the forms of the preterite.

368. This is especially noticeable in verbs of the second, fourth, and fifth classes. For instance, the shortened past participles *chose*, *froze*, *broke*, *stole*, *spoke*, and *trod* can be found to a greater or less extent in the literature that represents the language of society. But they are found now far less fre-

quently than formerly, and show signs of disappearing altogether. The tendency to distinguish between the two parts of the verb is made very prominent in the case of those of the second, fourth, and fifth classes, — to which the examples above cited belong, — because in them in most instances the vowel of the past participle had introduced itself into the preterite, largely in consequence of the desire once prevailing to assimilate the two forms.

369. In the discussion of the verbs of the fourth and fifth classes, it was remarked that in the former, *o*, the vowel of the past participle, made its way into the preterite, and displaced the *a* previously belonging to the stem (206); and that from this same class this same vowel further made its way into both the preterite and past participle of some verbs of the fifth class (214). There are in these, consequently, two forms of the preterite to be found, — one derived from the vowel of the original preterite, and the other from the vowel of the passive participle. The first of these are, of course, the older; but in most cases they have now gone out of use. The verbs of this class which have exhibited, or do exhibit, these double forms of the preterite are the following: —

CLASS IV.

Infinitive.	Old Preterite.	New Preterite.
bear,	bare,	bore.
break,	brake,	broke.
shear,	share,	shore.

Infinitive.	Old Preterite.	New Preterite.
steal,	stale,	stole.
tear,	tare,	tore.
	CLASS V.	
get,	gat,	got.
speak,	spake,	spoke.
tread,	trad,	trod.
weave,	wave,	wove.

The weak verb *wear*, which, on becoming strong, entered the fourth class, developed likewise two preterites, *ware* and *wore* (210). To this list may be added *drive*, of Class I., with its two preterites *drove* and *drave*. The latter form, which goes back to the Old English period, lasted down to the sixteenth century, and is still found occasionally in poetry. For *sware*, a collateral form of *swore*, see section 228.

370. Besides the two original tenses — the present and the preterite — English has had from the beginning, or has developed, certain verb-phrases which correspond in power and use to the tenses found in other languages of the Indo-European family. The primitive Indo-European had itself five tenses; and of these, the imperfect, the future, and the aorist were not found in any of the earliest Teutonic tongues. Their places, however, have all been supplied by compound forms, which it will be best to consider under the titles usually given them in English grammars.

THE FUTURE TENSE.

371. As the Anglo-Saxon had no future tense, the present was usually employed to express the relation denoted by it. This was a peculiarity shared by our speech with all the Teutonic tongues; and in all of them it continues to exist to the present day. Phrases like 'To-morrow is Sunday,' 'I am going to the city next week,' and numerous others, are common in every period of our speech, and in every great writer of our literature. But Modern English does not use the present for the future, by any means, as frequently as do several of the other Teutonic languages, in particular the modern High German.

372. But, even in the Anglo-Saxon period, the necessity for more precise and definite expression was beginning to be felt. The verbs *sceal*, 'I am obliged,' 'I ought,' and *wille*, 'I wish,' 'I have a mind to,' are, even at that early time, occasionally found joined to the infinitive of another verb to express its future; though, generally, and perhaps it is right to say invariably, there was, in the employment of these, more or less reference to the original idea of obligation involved in the one, and of inclination or intention in the other. Still, in the Northumbrian dialect, the idea of simple futurity may be said at times to be distinctly conveyed by these auxiliaries. In the Early English period this became a common usage, the employment of which steadily increased from that time, and is now universal.

373. In the sixteenth century a delicate distinction in the use of the auxiliaries *shall* and *will* began to be prevalent. It is not rigidly observed in our version of the Bible, and variations from the present use are found in writers of the Elizabethan period, such as Bacon and Shakspeare, though more frequently with the preterites *would* and *should* than with the present tenses of these verbs. In the seventeenth century the distinction between the two verbs became firmly established; though this statement is strictly true only of England, and not of the English spoken in Scotland or Ireland. Immigration has, to a great extent, broken down the distinction in the United States, especially in certain portions: the Irish do not know it, and the Germans do not acquire it.

FUTURE-PERFECT TENSE.

374. The future-perfect was the last of the verb-phrases denoting the relation of time to be formed. As its name denotes, it is a compound of the future and of the perfect. It was, consequently, unknown to the Anglo-Saxon; but it likewise rarely appeared in Early English, and it is certainly not common before Modern English.[1] Its use, indeed, is easily avoided, as its place can be, and often still is, taken by the

[1] The earliest instance of its employment I have chanced to notice is in the following extract from Caxton's *Recuyell of the History of Troye*, written between 1570 and 1575: "And I shall sende hit to Vlixes, and he shall bere the blame vpon hym, and euery man shall saye that Vlixes *shall have stolen* hyt, and we shall be quyte therof bothe two."

compound-perfect, and even sometimes by the present. It was the former, of these that was usually employed during the Middle English period. In fact, the same sentence, involving the conception expressed by this tense, has been and can be represented in a variety of ways, as may be seen in the following illustrations: —

1. Before the cock crow twice, thou deniest me thrice.
2. Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice.
3. Before the cock has crowed twice, thou shalt deny me thrice.
4. Before the cock shall crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice.
5. Before the cock has crowed twice, thou shalt have denied me thrice.
6. Before the cock shall have crowed twice, thou shalt have denied me thrice.

The first of these expressions is the one employed in Anglo-Saxon; the last is found only in Modern English, which, however, employs all the rest. The second and third belong to the Old English period; the fourth and fifth to the Middle English.

THE PERFECT AND PLUPERFECT.

375. The perfect and pluperfect are compound tenses, formed of the past participle, with the present and preterite respectively of either the verb *be* or *have*. The use of these forms goes back to the earliest period of English; but the simple preterite was then also

frequently employed to represent the idea expressed by both. Originally, the auxiliary *have* seems to have been joined only with transitive verbs, and *be* with intransitive; but the employment of the former has as steadily increased as that of the latter has diminished during the whole history of our speech. Even in Anglo-Saxon, though *be* was the strictly correct auxiliary with verbs of motion, *have* can be found joined with them also, as, *siððan hīe tōgædere gegān hæfdon* (BEOWULF, line 2631); and this has now become far the more common usage. The verb *be* was, from the beginning, added as an auxiliary to certain intransitive verbs denoting motion, rest, or change, as *is gone, is set, is grown*, and others; and this has maintained itself down to the present time. But so steady has been the encroachment of *have*, that this auxiliary may now be regarded as the regular one to form the perfect and pluperfect in Modern English.

376. Besides these forms, there are two other methods of inflection that need to be considered, — the one commonly called the progressive form, and the other the emphatic.

377. The former of these is compounded of the tenses of the verb *be* and of the present participle of another verb, as *I am speaking, I was speaking*. The forms used to denote the present and the preterite go back to the very earliest period of the language, and throughout the whole history of our speech there has been but little variation in the extent or character of

their usage. They need, therefore, no remark, save that, as compound tenses have been added to the substantive verb, a full set of corresponding forms with the present participle have been successively added, as *I shall* or *will be speaking, I have been speaking, I had been speaking.* These have come to be widely employed. Even the form for the future-perfect, *I shall* or *will have been speaking*, is fully recognized in grammars, though it is comparatively limited in usage.

378. The history of the so-called emphatic forms is far more varied. They are compounded of the present and preterite of the verb *do* with the infinitive of another verb. These forms cannot be said to have come into general use until the early part of the fifteenth century. In place of *do*, the employment of which then became frequent, *gin* had been the verb previously combined with the infinitive. This is strictly true of its preterite *gan*, rather than of the present; for while the latter is very infrequent, the former is very common. The verb *gin* is rarely found in Anglo-Saxon, outside of its compounds, especially *on-ginnan.* A similar statement can be made as to Modern English, in which it is scarcely met with save in the compound *be-gin.*

379. As an auxiliary, however, *gin* occurs constantly in Early English. Its employment in that capacity was foreshadowed by the compound, into which it entered. The use of the preterite of *on-ginnan*, with an infinitive to express the relation denoted by the preterite, can be traced back to the

Anglo-Saxon;[1] but, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the infinitive with the preterite of the simple verb *gin* became the form in general use. *Gan* was strictly used as the singular, and *gunne*(*n*) or *gonne*(*n*) as the plural, as has been previously pointed out in section 358.

380. *Do* itself, at this period, when employed with the infinitive, ordinarily meant 'to cause'; in which usage *make* has taken its place in Modern English. The signification conveyed by it can be exemplified by the following passage from Chaucer: —

> I wot wel she wol *do* me slee som day
> Som neighebor.
>
> Prologue to *Monk's Tale*, line 29.

It is from this causative sense that many suppose that *do* and *did* came at last to be looked upon as having, with the infinitive, the force of a present and a preterite. 'He did arrest the man' would, in the fourteenth century, strictly have meant, 'he caused the man to be arrested'; and the transition from the earlier usage to the modern does not seem difficult. But it is far more reasonable to attribute the rise of the idiom to another method of expression which has been common in English during all the periods of its history. This is the wide employment of the present and preterite of *do* to supply, in a following clause, the place of the principal verb of the preceding one. In

[1] For illustration, see the Anglo-Saxon poem of *Elene*, lines 303, 306, 311.

such a sentence, for instance, as 'He thinks upon this subject as I do,' the transition by which the principal verb would be supplied in many cases after *do* is a natural and an easy one. As already stated, this usage of *do* has been common during all periods of English, and is as frequently met with in the Anglo-Saxon as in any other.

381. But, whatever may be the fact as to its origin, this so-called emphatic form did not come into general use till the fifteenth century. Scattered instances of its employment can be found much earlier, extending up even into Anglo-Saxon. In the thirteenth century it is occasionally found; but neither during that nor the following century can it be said to be at all common. Even then the form for the preterite made by compounding *gan* with the infinitive was in altogether wider employment. The great writers who flourished at the beginning of the Middle English period — Chaucer, Langland, and Gower — rarely made use of the forms of *do* to express this relation. But with their immediate successors at the beginning of the fifteenth century, the verb so employed seems to have become a favorite. The joining to the infinitive of *do* and *did*, especially the latter, is fairly common in Lydgate's writings. It occurs a few times in the "Kinges Quair" of James I. of Scotland.[1] But by the end of the fifteenth century such a usage had become exceedingly frequent.[2]

382. Still it was in the Elizabethan era that the use

[1] See page 136. [2] See page 156.

of *do* and *did* with the infinitive was most widespread, at least in declarative sentences. In respect to these, a great change began to take place during the seventeenth century. So marked did the aversion become to the employment of this auxiliary in sentences of this kind, that it was felt to be out of place, unless used for the specific purpose of making the expression emphatic. Pope's satirical line, published in 1711, —

> While expletives their feeble aid *do* join, —

would have had no special point had it been composed a century earlier. This feeling apparently continued to increase during the eighteenth century, and seems to have been then much more potent than now. Dr. Johnson speaks of the words *do* and *did* as degrading in the current estimate the line that admits them; and in his Life of Cowley, he quotes from that poet the following passage, "in which," he observes, "every reader will lament to see just and noble thoughts defrauded of their praise by inelegance of language": —

> Where honor or where conscience *does* not bind,
> No other law shall shackle me.
> Slave to myself I ne'er will be;
> Nor shall my future actions be confined
> By my own present mind.
> Who by resolves and vows engaged *does* stand
> For days, that yet belong to fate,
> *Does* like an unthrift mortgage his estate,
> Before it falls into his hand,
> The bondman of the cloister so,
> All that he *does* receives *does* always owe.

And still as Time comes in, it goes away,
Not to enjoy but debts to pay.
Unhappy slave, and pupil to a bell!
Which his hour's work as well as hours *does* tell;
Unhappy till the last, the kind releasing knell.

383. Yet, while the language still continues ordinarily to restrict the use of *do*, and to a less extent that of *did*, in declarative sentences, it has gone to the other extreme in the case of interrogative and negative sentences. With them the employment of these auxiliaries has become almost universal. Men no longer ask under ordinary circumstances, *Go you?* but, in its place, *Do you go?* Again, they do not usually say, *You go not*, but *You do not go.*

THE IMPERATIVE.

384. The imperative is found in Anglo-Saxon only in the second person; but it has distinct endings for the singular and the plural. The form for the latter is precisely the same as the plural of the present indicative, as will be seen in the following examples of the imperative in the verbs already given: —

Sing.	sing,	dēm,	ere,	lōca,
Pl.	singaþ.	dēmaþ.	eriaþ.	lōciaþ.

The distinction between the two numbers was generally kept up until the fourteenth century. But long before that the plural termination *-ath* had been weakened into *-eth*, and of this latter the *-th* was not unfrequently dropped. From the fourteenth century

on, the forms for the two numbers began to be used interchangeably. This, no doubt, was largely due to the increasing employment of the plural pronoun of the second person for addressing single individuals (131). As difference of form for the two numbers lost, in consequence, its usefulness, the ending of the plural went out of use in the fifteenth century.[1]

385. For the first and third persons of the imperative, the subjunctive, followed generally by the personal pronouns, was widely employed in Anglo-Saxon. This usage has lasted down to modern times, and is found to this day, at least in poetry. *Return we to our subject*, meaning 'Let us return to our subject,' is a method of expression which has been employed from the earliest period of our speech. The place of the first person plural of the imperative was also supplied in Anglo-Saxon by an infinitive preceded by *utan*, which corresponds to the modern 'let us.' This went wholly out of use within the second century after the Norman Conquest. After that time the place of both the methods of expression just mentioned came to be wholly or mainly supplied by the verb *let*, with a personal pronoun. Still, though this made its appearance in the thirteenth century, it can hardly be called very common even in the fourteenth. It has now become, with an infinitive complement, the ordinary method of representing the imperative of the first and third persons.

[1] See page 156.

THE INFINITIVE.

386. The infinitive was formed in the primitive Indo-European by adding to the verbal stem the suffix *-ana*. This in all the early Teutonic languages had dropped the final *-a*, and, becoming *-an*, had been appended directly to the verb without any connective. Or perhaps it may more properly be said that it had dropped the initial *a* also, and that *n* alone was the sign of the infinitive; thus 'to bind' is, in the Anglo-Saxon period, represented simply by the form *bind-a-n*, made up of the root *bind*, the connective *a*, and *n* the infinitive sign. In the Old Frisian and the Old Norse this final *-n* had also disappeared, and the infinitive regularly terminated in *-a*. While the West-Saxon dialect clung firmly to *-an*, the Northumbrian exhibited the characteristic of the Frisian and the Norse in giving up *-n*; thus the infinitive *come* is in West-Saxon *cuman;* in Northumbrian it is *cuma*.

387. The weakening of the *-an* to *-en* speedily became universal not long after the Conquest. As to the retention or abandonment of the letter *-n* itself, usage was, however, exceedingly variable. In fact, it remained for several centuries; and the Romance verbs that were brought into the language assumed it as naturally as they did the inflections of the tenses. It is not to be understood that it was anywhere in exclusive use. Infinitives without *-n* were for a long while just as common as the fuller form, if not more so. In the fourteenth century the disposition to drop

this letter became very pronounced ; in the fifteenth, it had become general ; in the sixteenth, the *-n* was used only for poetic effect, or as a designed imitation of the archaic style. It is therefore not infrequent in Spenser and his followers. In fact it is apt to occur wherever there is an intention to reproduce ancient forms of expression, as in the following citation from one of the prologues ascribed to Gower in the Shakspearian play of Pericles : —

> Though he strive
> To *killen* bad.

388. In truth the whole history of this ending is essentially the same as that of the plural of the present tense, which has already been recounted (339–341). Like that, after the *-n* disappeared, the final *-e* which was left ceased to be sounded. Like that, it was in some instances dropped in the spelling, in others retained. The latter was something fairly certain to take place when the connective of the original Anglo-Saxon verb was *ia* rather than *a* ; as, for instance, our word *hate* comes from *hat-ia-n*, whereas from *bind-a-n* we have *bind*, and not *binde*. But the retention of the final *-e* is very arbitrary.

389. The infinitive is in its nature a verbal noun, and in Anglo-Saxon it had a dative case, ending in *-anne*, invariably preceded by the preposition *tō ;* as, *tō bindanne*. This is frequently called the gerundial infinitive. The termination in *-anne* speedily passed, after the Conquest, into *-enne* or *-ene*. At last, drop-

ping the final *-e* entirely, its form became the same as that of the pure infinitive, originally terminating in *-an*. Both, therefore, came to have the same ending *-en*, and naturally to share in the changes which it underwent. One effect of this unification of form was, that after the Conquest, the infinitive early began to assume the preposition *to* before it. This tendency steadily increased, so that at the present day the infinitive without this preposition is rarely found, unless preceded by such verbs or verbal phrases as *dare*, *need*, *bid*, *make*, *let*, *had better*, *had sooner*, *had rather*, *had as lief*, and others, or by verbs denoting physical or intellectual perception, like *see*, *watch*, and *feel*. At times the infinitive, when joined with these verbs, takes also the preposition before it. This was once more common than now, at least in the case of phrases like *had rather*, which in the literary language succeeded *had liefer*. This usage may be illustrated by the following example: —

> *Levere* ich *hadde to* dyen on a knyf
> Than thee offende, trewe, deere wyf.
> CHAUCER, *Merchant's Tale*, line 919.

390. This use of *tō* with the pure infinitive (as *tō sēcan*, PHŒNIX, line 275) is exceedingly rare in Anglo-Saxon; but, as we have just seen, it has now become so general that, with the disappearance of the special gerundial form, the preposition itself has almost come to be regarded as belonging to the infinitive. Hence there has been evinced, on the part of many, a marked

hostility to the tendency, which has displayed itself widely in Modern English, to insert an adverb between the preposition and the infinitive for the sake of greater emphasis or clearness. This practice, examples of which go as far back, certainly, as the fifteenth century,[1] has now become very common. In spite of the opposition it encounters, there is little question that it will establish itself permanently in the language.

391. The gerundial infinitive, however, occasionally preserved a distinct form down to the end of the fourteenth century. It was then frequently confused with the present participle in *-ende;* but before the beginning of the Modern English period it had disappeared from the language. Still though the form had disappeared, the sense survived. Relics of its original use continue to be common to this day in phrases such as 'the house to let,' 'not fit to eat,' and numerous others.

392. The infinitive of the past, represented, for example, by *to have told*, is not known to the Anglo-Saxon. It originated in the Old English period, apparently toward its conclusion, and was frequently employed during the Middle English and first part of the Modern English period. When the verb of the predicate is in the past tense, there has been constantly exhibited a disposition on the part of the language to resort to this form of the infinitive. This practice

[1] *E.g.* Whanne ever he takith upon him *for to* in neiȝbourli or brotherli manner *correpte* his Cristen neiȝbour or brother. — PECOCK'S *Repressor*, Prologue (about 1450).

goes back to the fourteenth century, as may be illustrated by the following example: —

> And with the staf she drough ay neer and neer,
> And wende *han hit* this Aleyn at the fulle.
> CHAUCER, *Reeve's Tale*, line 385.

Since that time it has been exceedingly common, and has in its favor the sanction of usage by the greatest English authors. Of late the language seems disposed to abandon its employment; at least it is condemned by many grammarians.

THE PARTICIPLES.

393. The history of the past participle has already been given in the discussion of the two conjugations. In both of these the present participle was formed in the same way; that is, by the adding of the suffix *-ende* to the radical syllable, as *sing-ende*, 'singing.' This termination came to vary somewhat in the three dialects. Using this same verb for the sake of illustration, we find the suffix appearing in Old English in the three following forms: —

Southern.	Midland.	Northern.
sing-*inde*.	sing-*ende*.	sing-*and*(*e*).

394. In the Southern dialect, as early as the twelfth century the participle was often confounded with the gerundial infinitive in *-enne*. More important, however, as regards the future of the form, was the fact that in the same dialect it began at the same early

period to assume at times the termination of the verbal substantive. This in Anglo-Saxon ended usually in *-ung*, but sometimes in *-ing*. After the Norman Conquest, the latter became finally its exclusive form. It became also the form finally adopted by the present participle. Necessarily the only distinction at first between it and the verbal noun was that the former had in addition a final *-e*.

395. From the Southern dialect, this form in *-inge* passed into the Midland, and after losing its final *-e*, was adopted as the standard form in Modern English. The Northern participial ending *-and(e)* was due to Scandinavian influence, but never made much headway in the Midland. Still such forms as *glitterand*, *followand*, *comand* were occasionally employed in these dialects, and have sometimes been used in Modern English by those seeking to reproduce the language of the past.

396. The simple present and past participles belong to the earliest period of the language. On the other hand, the compound participles are all of later growth, and though useful, are none of them absolutely indispensable. The forms that have been developed will be illustrated by the use of the transitive verb *love* and the intransitive *go*.

Being loved.	Being gone.
Having loved.	Having gone.
Having been loved.	Having been gone.
Having been loving.	Having been going.

397. These various forms seem to have come into existence in the order just given. The first of them, the composition of *being* with the simple past participle, probably made its first appearance in the language in the fifteenth century; but it did not become current till the earlier part of the sixteenth. Even then it is not often met with, though in this respect there is great difference in writers of that time. It was not until the latter half of that century that the compounds of *having* with the past participle came much into use. Necessarily the compounds with *having been* were still later. Of these, the joining of this compound to the past participle seems to have long preceded its joining to the present participle; that is to say, such participial phrases as *having been gone* were earlier, as even now they are much more common, than those represented by *having been going*. The former were certainly in use in the latter half of the sixteenth century. On the other hand, the composition of *being* with the present participle, though perfectly legitimate in theory, has scarcely been known in practice. Expressions like *being going*, found in Shakspeare's "Cymbeline" (act iii. scene 6), are very rare.

PASSIVE FORMATIONS.

398. The primitive Indo-European tongue had two voices, — the active, and the middle or reflexive, which, from the very beginning, seems to have assumed the functions of the voice we call the passive.

The use of the reflexive to do the office of the passive is common enough in many modern tongues where the reflexive pronoun is not united with the verb, nor changed at all in form; and how easy the transition is in sense can be shown in our own speech by many familiar examples. *I persuade myself*, for illustration, differs very slightly, and in some cases not at all, from *I am persuaded*. It is from the reflexive that the passive has been developed in the history of the languages of the Indo-European family.

399. But in the Teutonic branch only one of these voices can be said to exist. The Gothic, indeed, had a middle, which, with some few exceptions, was used in a passive sense; but it was only found in the present tense, and in that the persons were much confounded. These and other signs show, that, at the time of the translation of the Bible by Ulfilas, the form for this voice was going out of use. In the other Teutonic tongues, occasional traces of a passive, which must once have existed, can be found; but they are few in number and slight in importance. The only one which our earliest speech retained was *hātte*, meaning equally 'I am called,' or, 'I was called.'

400. In all of the early tongues of the Teutonic branch, the loss of the form was supplied by compounding the passive participle with the present and preterite of verbs corresponding in meaning to our verbs *be* and *become*. In Anglo-Saxon these verbs were three: *bēon* and *wesan*, both meaning 'to be,' and *weorþan*, meaning 'to become.' The last verb has

now gone out of use in our speech; but it existed as an independent verb down to the beginning of the Modern English period,[1] though almost always in the phrase *woe worth*, meaning 'woe be.' In German, the corresponding form *werden* was chosen as the auxiliary to form the passive; but in English it was never common after the Anglo-Saxon period, and indeed cannot be said to have been common during it. In Old English the formation of the passive with the present and preterite of *wesan* and *bēon* became early predominant, and *worthe*(*n*) gradually went out of use.

401. When the forms of *worthe*(*n*), 'to become,' had been given up, those of the substantive verb represented by *am*, *was*, and *be* were the only ones left to express the passive. It was, from the nature of things, an office for which they were ill calculated; for, with a verb which expresses a simple action, and not a continuous state, the compounding of its past participle with the present tense of the substantive verb did not denote something actually taking place, but something which had taken place. *The field is reaped* corresponds in form to *the man is hated;* but it does not correspond in the sense given to the verbal phrase. With the latter expression there is existing action implied; in the former, only a completed result. This was a difficulty inherent in the employment of this form. To avoid it, the language

[1] What will *worth*, what will be the end of this man?
LATIMER, *Lent Sermons* (Arber's reprint, page 120).

resorted to expedients of all kinds: it changed the construction of the sentence, it employed various circumlocutions, and at last, in the eighteenth century, it adopted verb-phrases made up of the present and preterite of *be* and the compound passive participle. The more detailed history of the passive formations in such expressions as *the field is being reaped* has already been given, and need not be repeated here.[1] As stated there, the use of these forms, like that of the emphatic forms with *do* and *did*, is confined to the present and the preterite tense.

402. The discussion of the use of the passive belongs strictly to syntax, and finds properly no place here; and it is only necessary to repeat what has been previously said, that in the freedom with which, and in the extent to which, the passive is employed, English has gone far beyond other cultivated tongues. Such phrases as *he was given a book*, *he was told the truth*, and the like, run back to the Middle English period, and occur in all the great writers of our tongue. Expressions like the one in the following line, —

> *Be not denied access*, stand at her doors,
> SHAKSPEARE, *Twelfth Night*, act i. sc. 4, —

are often ignorantly condemned by those who are unaware that these exemplify one of the most thor-

[1] See pages 170–173. The employment of this formation was foreshadowed in the seventeenth century. In a tragedy of Thomas Porter's, first published in 1663, occur the following lines: —

> The fear of theeves is worse than the loss we can
> Sustain by them; *we're* still *a being rob'd.*
> *The Villain*, ed. of 1670, page 30.

oughly established and characteristic idioms of the English language.

PRETERITE-PRESENT VERBS.

403. In all the early Teutonic tongues, there were a number of strong verbs whose preterite tense had assumed the signification of a present; and along with this, and perhaps in consequence of it, the original present tense had gone entirely out of use. A familiar illustration of this assumption by a past tense of a present meaning can be seen in the colloquial use in Modern English of *I have got* in the sense of 'I have,' 'I possess.'

404. The process, however, had not stopped at the point indicated by this common expression. When the original present had disappeared, the original preterite, which had assumed entirely the signification of a new present, went on to develop a new past tense. This latter was always of the weak conjugation. So, in the inflection of the new present tense, the peculiarities of the preterite of the strong conjugation are found; while in the new preterite the inflection is the one which regularly characterizes the weak verbs.

405. In Anglo-Saxon there were twelve of these verbs. Of these, seven continue to exist in some form, or have left traces of themselves to some extent in Modern English. As each has had a history of its own, each will necessarily be treated of by itself, so far as the changes which it has undergone have not already been discussed in the account given in the

previous pages of the inflection of the verb. Only the forms of the present and the preterite indicative are here laid down. The subjunctive has nothing about its history different from that of other verbs, and the other parts are developed in some of these verbs, and absent in others. It is, however, to be added that the infinitive forms here given are in several instances purely hypothetical.

406. To Class I. of the strong verbs (167) belong the first two:—

(1) *Āgan.*

This has given rise to both a defective and a regular weak verb in Modern English. The defective verb *ought* is in its origin the new weak preterite of this preterite-present verb; and its relations can only be comprehended clearly by examining the original forms.

Sing.	Present.	Preterite.
1.	āg, āh, *I own, possess,*	āhte, *ought,*
2.	āht, āhst,	āhtest,
3.	āh.	āhte.
Pl.		
1, 2, 3.	āgon.	āhton.

407. By comparing the Anglo-Saxon forms with those of its class, it will be seen that, even in the earliest period, this verb had deviated from the regular inflection; for the vowel of the plural had become the same as the singular, and we have *āgon* instead of

ġon. The present forms continued to be employed in the Early English period, but were gradually supplanted by the preterite. From the infinitive the word *owe* came into use, and, after having for a while *ought* as its preterite, developed the regular form *owed.* The general signification of 'possess,' expressed by this verb, came also to be limited largely to the possession of debts. In this sense of pecuniary obligation the preterite *owed* was in time employed by preference. This left the older preterite *ought* to convey exclusively the idea of moral obligation or of fitness. To this one signification, essentially, it is now confined. It is also limited to this one tense; though the language of the uneducated shows a constant tendency to treat *ought* as a past participle, and the verbal phrase *had ought* is regularly employed by them. From the original past participle *āgen,* the adjective *own* has been derived.

(2) *Witan.*

408. The forms of this verb have given rise to much misunderstanding. All difficulties connected with it disappear at once on an examination of the original inflection: —

Sing.	Present.	Preterite.
1.	wāt, *wot,*	wiste, *wist,*
2.	wāst,	wistest,
3.	wāt.	wiste.
Pl.		
1, 2, 3.	witon.	wiston.

409. Of this verb, the infinitive, *to wit*, still exists in Modern English, especially in legal phraseology, but used in the adverbial sense of 'namely.' Another form of it, *weet*, is occasionally found in our earlier poetry. The present and preterite, though little employed, are still retained, mainly through their occurrence in the Bible. The plural of the present, *wite(n)*, lasted down to the fifteenth century, but *wot* of the singular had largely taken its place considerably before that period; and after it, the latter form was almost invariably used of both numbers.

410. In the sixteenth century *wot* farther developed itself as a regular verb of the weak conjugation, having an infinitive *wot*, and in the present tense singular, *wot*, *wottest*, *wotteth* or *wots*, the preterite *wotted*, and the present participle *wotting*. These forms did not permanently establish themselves, nor were they ever as common as the older and correcter forms. The following are examples: —

> Your grace may sit secure, if none but we
> Do *wot* of your abode.
>
> MARLOWE, *Edward II.*, act iv. sc. 6.

> Thou *wottest* not what thou sayest.
>
> PEELE, *Edward I.* (ed. of 1861, page 382).

> No man *wotteth* better what he should do and say.
>
> MORE, *Edward V.* (reprint of 1812, page 510).

> The ploughman little *wots* to turn the pen.
>
> LODGE, *Rosalynd.*

> And why he left your court, the gods themselves,
> *Wotting* no more than I, are ignorant.
> SHAKSPEARE, *Winter's Tale*, act. iii. sc. 2.

> I which *wotted* best
> His wretched drifts and all his cursed case.
> SACKVILLE, *Complaint of Buckingham*, line 710.

411. The Early English present participle *witting* is found occasionally in the Modern English period, and is still preserved in the adverb *unwittingly*. The similar past participle *wist* was never very common outside of the phrase 'Had I wist,' and is now obsolete or archaic. The negative verbs *not*, from *ne wot*, and *niste*, from *ne wiste*, died out in the Middle English period. As might be expected, as the word *wot* became obsolescent, its character was sometimes mistaken, and it was used with a preterite meaning instead of a present, as in the following quotation from Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress": —

> There he stood still, and he *wot* not what to do.
> (Ed. of 1678, page 18.)

412. Very curiously, a singular blunder produced a new verb as the supposed present of *wist*. The old past participle of *witan* was *gewiss*, which became an adjective in Anglo-Saxon, with the meaning of 'certain.' It has already been stated that the Anglo-Saxon prefix *ge* was turned, in Early English, into *y* or *i* (301). The Anglo-Saxon adjective *gewis(s)*, 'certain,' accordingly became in Early English the adverb *iwis*, or *ywis*, 'certainly.' In the sixteenth century this was

frequently printed *Iwis*, or *I wis*. As a consequence, the capital *I* was supposed to be the personal pronoun, instead of the modern representative of the prefix *ge;* and *wis* was accordingly assumed to be a verb, and regarded as the present of *wist*. *Wis* has rarely, if ever, been used outside of the phrase *I wis*, which is, however, by no means uncommon in poetry, even in our own day. A verb *wisse(n)*, *wis*, — from Anglo-Saxon *wīssian*, 'to show,' 'to instruct,' — died out in the Middle English period, and has no connection with the present word.

413. To the third class of verbs of the strong conjugation (189) belong two preterite-presents. The first is: —

(3) *Cunnan.*

The following is the inflection of the verb in Anglo-Saxon: —

Sing.	Present.	Preterite.
1.	can(n), *can*,	cūðe, *could*,
2.	canst,	cūðest,
3.	can(n).	cūðe.
Pl.		
1, 2, 3.	cunnon.	cūðon.

414. It will be seen, that, even in the Anglo-Saxon, the weak termination of the second person, *canst*, had taken the place of the regular strong form, *cunne*. In Early English *coude* is found alongside of *couthe* as a form for the preterite, and in process of time sup-

planted the earlier form. Into this *coud(e)* in the sixteenth century an *l* was inserted, by a false analogy with *would* and *should*; but it has never been pronounced. The verb never had a present participle, and its past *cūð* — in Early English *couth* or *coud* — has gone out of use; though, as an adjective, it survives in the last syllable of *un-couth*. The infinitive has also disappeared, though it was common in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in the form *conne*, and in the sense of 'to be able.' In the form *can*, it still continued to exist in the seventeenth century, though as an archaism, and is sometimes met with even in our own day. Examples are:—

Ne no man elles shal me *conne* espye.
CHAUCER, *Legend of Good Women*, line 2044.

In will the best condicion is not to will, the second not to *can*.
BACON, *Essays*, ed. of 1623. (Of Great Place.)

415. *Can* as an independent verb survives, however, in the form *con*, 'to learn,' and is regularly inflected according to the weak conjugation, as, for example, 'He has conned his lesson.' Furthermore, in the Northern dialect, there came into frequent use a form *can*, which was in its origin a mere variant of *gan*, and used like that with the infinitive to represent the preterite (378). Later, it sometimes came to be confounded with the present-preterite *can*, and, in consequence, the past tense *couthe* or *coude* of that verb was erroneously used in the sense of 'did.'

416. (4) *Durran.*

Sing.	Present.	Preterite.
1.	dear, *dare*,	dorste, *durst*,
2.	dearst,	dorstest,
3.	dear.	dorste.
Pl.		
1, 2, 3.	durron.	dorston.

The presence in Anglo-Saxon of the infinitive of this verb is doubtful. During that period it will be observed that the original form *durre* of the second person had been supplanted by *dearst.*

417. As the existing present is in its origin a preterite, the third person of the singular is precisely the same as the first; but the tendency to make it conform to the regular inflection, and form its third person in *-s*, has been powerful since the beginning of Modern English. Both forms, *he dare* and *he dares*, have flourished side by side during the last three centuries. The verb, furthermore, shows a disposition to go over entirely to the regular form of the weak conjugation. The old, irregular, weak preterite *durst* is now far less common than formerly, and in the sense of 'to challenge, defy,' is never employed at all. This form *durst* made its way at one time into the past participle. In all of its meanings, indeed, *dare* is now frequently inflected regularly, and the new forms have largely supplanted the old. *Dared* made its appearance as early, certainly, as the end of the sixteenth century, and its employment has steadily increased from that time.

418. To the fourth class of strong verbs (205) belongs: —

(5) *Sculan.*

Sing.	Present.	Preterite.
1.	sceal, *shall,*	sc(e)olde, *should,*
2.	scealt,	sc(e)oldest,
3.	sceal.	sc(e)olde.
Pl.		
1, 2, 3.	sculon.	sc(e)oldon.

419. In Anglo-Saxon, *ic sceal* meant ordinarily 'I am under obligation,' 'I ought,' 'I must.' Its transition to express the future has already been pointed out in the account of that tense (372). It has remained throughout its history faithful, comparatively speaking, to the Anglo-Saxon form; and the distinction between the vowel of the singular and of the plural was kept up, at least by some writers, as late as the fifteenth century. In fact, this verb preserved this distinction after most of the other strong preterites had abandoned it; *shal* and *shul(en)* being, in the fourteenth century, the respective methods usually found of denoting the singular and the plural. The Northern dialect sometimes contracted this verb. In that, such forms as *Ise*, 'I shall,' and others of a similar character, not unfrequently make their appearance.

420. To the fifth class of strong verbs (211) belongs: —

(6) *Magan.*

Sing.	Present.	Preterite.
1.	mæg, *may*,	meahte / mihte }, *might*,
2.	meaht / miht },	meahtest / mihtest },
3.	mæg.	meahte / mihte }.
Pl.		
1, 2, 3.	magon.	meahton / mihton }.

421. *Mæg* meant, in Anglo-Saxon, 'I have power,' 'I am able,' but in this signification its place has been taken by *can*. The infinitive *magan* or *mugan* is not found in Anglo-Saxon, but in Early English appears in various forms, of which *mowe(n)* may be taken as the representative, as seen in the following example: —

> For who is that ne wolde hire glorifie,
> To *mowen* swich a knight don live or die.
> CHAUCER, *Troilus and Cryseyde*, ii., 1594.

Precisely similar forms became established for the present tense, as: —

> Right so *mowe* ye out of myn herte bringe,
> Swich vois, right as you list, to laughe or pleyne.
> CHAUCER, *Legend of Good Women*, line 92.

The second person singular of the present *thou might* lasted down to the Middle English period, and was

not entirely supplanted by *mayst* until the fifteenth century. *Mought*, the Early English variant of *might*, has now become dialectic.

422. To the sixth class of strong verbs (**221**) belongs: —

(7) *Mōtan.*

Sing.	Present.	Preterite.
1.	mōt, *mote*,	mōste, *must*,
2.	mōst,	mōstest,
3.	mōt.	mōste.
Pl.		
1, 2, 3.	mōton.	mōston.

423. The infinitive is not met with either in Anglo-Saxon or later English, and the verb itself has had a history different from most of the others. It existed in full vigor down to the Middle English period. In that the present *mot* was used in the two senses of *may* and of *must*.

> Therfore, in stede of wepynge and preyeres,
> Men *moot* yeve silver to the poore freres.
> CHAUCER, Prologue to *Canterbury Tales*, line 232.

> But al *mot* ben assayed, hoot and cold,
> A man *mot* ben a fool, or yong or old.
> *Ib.*, *Knight's Tale*, line 953.

In the sense of *may*, the place of *mot* was taken by the preceding verb *mæg*, and in the sense of *must*, its own weak preterite supplanted it, and has now come to be used both as a present and a preterite. *Must*

has now no inflection whatever, and to indicate certain preterite relations the language has had recourse to verb-phrases based upon *to be obliged.* The original *mot* has practically disappeared from Modern English. Though it is occasionally heard, it is limited to a few phrases, such as *so mote it be*, or to imitations of the archaic style.

424. Besides these, relics of two other Anglo-Saxon preterite-present verbs lasted down to a comparatively late period. One of these is *ðarf*, 'I need,' with its weak preterite *ðorfte*. This verb, in Early English, frequently dropped the *f*, probably owing to the confusion which prevailed to some extent between it and *dare*. It was generally used impersonally with a dependent dative, as will be seen in the following example: —

> And therfore this proverbe is seyd ful sooth,
> Hym *thar* nat wene wel that yvele dooth.
> CHAUCER, *Reeve's Tale*, line 400.

The confusion that existed between this verb and *dare* is exemplified in the use of the preterite in the following line: —

> Thou *thruste* nevere han the more fere.
> CHAUCER, *Troilus and Cryseyde*, iii., 572.

Here several manuscripts have *durste*, though the context requires the sense of 'needest.'

425. The other verb is *man*, or *mon*, 'I intend,' with its weak preterite *munde*. This verb has lasted

down to the Modern English period. It has been especially common in the Northern dialect in the forms *moun*, *maun*, and *mun*, and its prevalence in that was largely due to the influence of the Old Norse *munu*. With the infinitive it frequently served as a verbal phrase equivalent to the future, and can often be rendered by 'am to,' 'am about to,' passing over into the sense of obligation. Examples are: —

> I *mun* be maried a Sunday.
> *Ralph Roister Doister* (Arber's reprint, page 87).

> A gentleman *mun* show himself like a gentleman.
> BEN JONSON, *Every Man in his Humor*, act i. sc. 1.

426. To this list of preterite-present verbs of the early language that still survive, in some form, to our day, there is allied one, which, even in its original form, presents great irregularities. This is *willan*, one of the auxiliaries now used by us to express the future. It was originally a subjunctive of the preterite, but had discarded some of the forms belonging to the subjunctive, and taken those of the indicative in their place.

Willan.

Sing.	Present.	Preterite.
1.	wille, wile, *will*,	wolde, *would*,
2.	wilt,	woldest,
3.	wille, wile.	wolde.
Pl.		
1, 2, 3.	willaþ.	woldon.

427. In Early English, forms of the present with *o* instead of *i* were common, and *wol* and *wil* stood side by side until the fifteenth century. *Wol*, indeed, is constantly met with in the literary language of the fourteenth century, though it never succeeded in driving out *wil*. For example: —

> And at a knight than *wol* I first biginne.
> CHAUCER, Prologue to *Canterbury Tales*, line 42.

A relic of this once frequent use of *wol* has been preserved in the colloquial form *won't*. This is a contraction of *wol not*, which was itself sometimes found in the forms *wonnot* or *wonot*. From this the transition to *won't* was easy.

428. A negative form of this verb, *nille*, 'will not,' *nolde*, 'would not,' was in existence during all periods of the language down to the beginning of Modern English. Occasional instances of its occurrence can be found later, though usually it is employed in expressions like *will he, nill he*, 'will he, or will he not,' where there is a designed contrast with the simple verb; such as is exemplified in Shakspeare's "Taming of the Shrew," act ii. scene 1: —

> *Will you, nill you*, I will marry you.

The colloquial though little used *willy, nilly* still preserves the negative verb.

429. Apparently, by analogy with the preterite-present verbs, the verb *need* frequently drops the *-s* of the third person singular of the present tense when

followed by the infinitive of another verb. 'He *need* not do it,' for instance, is a method of expression much more common than 'he *needs* not do it.' This usage certainly goes back to the beginning of the sixteenth century, and is perhaps earlier.

430. Beside the preterite-present verbs, there are three others which deserve special mention. One of these is the verb *do*.

Dōn.

Present.	Preterite.
1. dō,	dyde,
2. dēst,	dydest,
3. dēð.	dyde.
1, 2, 3. dōð.	dydon.

431. The modern forms exhibit little variation from the Anglo-Saxon, except that in the second and third persons of the present singular they have abandoned the original vowel-variation. The Early English *doth*, based upon the Anglo-Saxon *dōð*, lasted as a present plural into the Modern English period (343). It is found frequently in Shakspeare, though in modern editions it is usually changed, without notice, into the standard form *do*. The second person singular *doest* is used as a principal verb, and not as an auxiliary, whereas the other form *dost* is used regularly as an auxiliary, rarely as a principal verb. A similar statement may be made of the two forms in *-th* of the third person, *doeth* and *doth*.

32. *Gān.*

Present.	Preterite.
1. gā,	ēode,
2. gǣst,	ēodest,
3. gǣð.	ēode.
1, 2, 3. gāð.	ēodon.

33. From the paradigm given above, it will be seen the verb *go*, even in Anglo-Saxon, had supplied its erite by a form taken from another stem. *Ēode* inued to be used during the Old English period, appeared usually in the form *yede*, and occasionally ; but early in the Middle English period it showed clear signs of falling into disuse. It occurs but three times in Chaucer, always in the form *yede(n)*, as, for example: —

> Troilus . . . in his chaumber sit, and hath abyden
> Til two or three of his messagers *yeden*
> For Pandarus.
>
> *Troilus and Cryseyde*, ii., 937.

It is, however, more common in Langland, and occasionally appears in the poetry of the fifteenth century.

434. In the sixteenth century the existence of the two forms *yede* and *yode* led to a curious error on the part of those authors who were seeking to reproduce the diction of the past. *Yede*, often spelled *yeed* or *yead*, was treated as an infinitive or present, of which *yode* was the preterite. Thus Sackville, in the "Induction to the Mirror for Magistrates," has the following lines: —

> Here enter'd we, and *yeding* forth, anon
> An horrible loathly lake we might discern.
>
> Line 196.

Similar usage can be found in Spenser, as follows: —

> Then bad the knight his lady *yede* aloof.
>
> *Faerie Queene*, I., xi., 5.
>
> So long he *yode*, yet no adventure found,
> Which Fame of her shrill trompet worthy reedes.
>
> *Ib.*, II., vii., 2.

435. To supply the place of *ēode*, recourse was had later to another Anglo-Saxon verb, *wendan*, which had *wende* and *went* as preterite and past participle. To this verb strictly belong the compound tenses *I have went*, *I had went*, which are sometimes met with late in the Middle English period.[1] The original preterite was *wende* or *wente*. The latter became the regular form in Old English, and in its shortened form *went* was at last adopted as the preterite of *go* in place of *yede*. The participle *went* also disappeared; and the verb *wenden*, which had now become *wend* by the dropping of the final *-en*, developed in its turn the regular form *wended*.

436. *Gangan*, a fuller form of this verb, can be found in the Anglo-Saxon period with a preterite *geong*. The present tense of *gān* adopted throughout in Old English the vowel of the first person, though

[1] They occur occasionally much later, e.g., "As if the scholars *had went* from Cambridge to Northampton." — *Diary* of Thomas Hearne, May 9, 1730.

even in Middle English the form *geth*, 'goes,' occasionally makes its appearance, as will be seen by the following example: —

> For vengeaunce of his sones deth
> None other grace ther ne *geth*.
> GOWER, *Confessio Amantis*, Book V.

Go, like *do*, was frequently used in the Midland dialect as a past participle. The past participle of the compound *āgān* lost in Old English its participial use, and came to be employed as an adjective, or adverb, and still survives in *ago* or *agone*.

437. Finally, there remains the substantive verb. In its various parts three roots have been, and still are, represented. In the form of the verb regularly used in Anglo-Saxon, the root *es* is found in the present tense; the root *wes* in the preterite, the infinitive, and the present participle. The root *ben* furnished additional and independent forms for the present, the infinitive, and the present participle.

438. Of this most important of verbs, it is desirable to give the history of most of the parts, and each will be considered separately. We begin with the two present tenses.

Sing.	Indicative.	Subjunctive.	Indicative.	Subjunctive.
1.	eom,	sīe,	bēo(m),	bēo,
2.	eart,	sīe,	bist,	bēo,
3.	is.	sīe.	biþ.	bēo.
Pl.				
1, 2, 3.	sind, sindon.	sīn.	bēoþ.	bēon.

439. The forms of the indicative singular, *eom*, *eart*, *is*, have been preserved, with little change, through all the periods of the language. The plural *sind*, or *sindon*, however, did not last long beyond the Anglo-Saxon period, nor did the subjunctive *sīe*. In the Northumbrian dialect *am* was the form corresponding to the West-Saxon *eom*, and in the plural of that dialect *earon*, or *aron*, was found side by side with *sind*, or *sindon*. *Earon* has also been pointed out as occurring in a very few instances in West-Saxon. Still it was to the Northern dialect, aided by its exclusive use in the language of the Scandinavian invaders of England, that we owe the general adoption into our tongue of *are* as the plural of the present tense. It was a gradual process. When *sind* was given up, the plural *be*, in the forms *beth*, *ben*, and *be*, took its place in the dialect of the South and of the Midland. This continued to be the case for several centuries. Even at the beginning of the Middle English period, *are* was far from common in the Midland dialect. Chaucer almost invariably uses *be* or *ben* as the plural of the present; and the same remark is true of Langland and Gower, though *are* is more common with them than with Chaucer. The Northern writers, however, commonly use *are*. From them the practice extended widely in the latter part of the fifteenth century, and became thoroughly established in the sixteenth.

440. *Be*, which, during the Anglo-Saxon period, was largely used as a future, maintained itself firmly

as the regular substantive verb in the Southern dialect. In the singular form, *be, beest, beth,* it not only continues to this day to be heard in popular or dialectic speech, but at various periods has not unfrequently made its way into the language of literature. The following paradigm will show the most common forms the inflection of its present tense assumed in the various dialects : —

1. be,
2. beest,
3. beth, bes.

1, 2, 3. beth, ben, bin, be, bes.

441. The plural *be,* furthermore, was constantly used as an indicative form down to the seventeenth century, and even later, and is still occasionally employed in poetry, especially in the phrase *there be.* The tendency showed itself, in the sixteenth century, to limit the verb *be* to the subjunctive, and this has now become the established general rule.[1] The plural forms *ben* and *bin* have also been erroneously regarded by some writers as singular, as in the following passage : —

> Of tragic muses shepherds con no skill;
> Enough is them, if Cupid *ben* displeased,
> To sing his praise on slender, oaten pipe.[2]

This error has never, however, been common.

[1] See page 167.

[2] PEELE, *Arraignment of Paris,* act iv. sc. 1.

442. The preterite of the substantive verb is the preterite of a strong verb, of Class V. (219), partially obsolete in Anglo-Saxon, but fully preserved in Gothic. It was thus inflected: —

Sing.	Indicative.	Subjunctive.
1.	wæs,	wǣre,
2.	wǣre,	wǣre,
3.	wæs.	wǣre.
Pl.		
1, 2, 3.	wǣron	wǣren.

443. This is the only preterite which has retained in Modern English the vowel-variation once distinguishing from the first and third persons of the indicative singular, the three persons of the plural, the second person of the singular, and all the persons of the subjunctive. It also exhibits clearly what was found in several Anglo-Saxon verbs, — the transition of the letter *s* into *r*, so that, instead of saying *was* or *wese* in the plural, we say *were* (14). During the Middle English period this preterite presented the following inflections: —

Sing.	Indicative.	Subjunctive.
1.	was,	were,
2.	were,	were,
3.	was.	were.
Pl.		
1, 2, 3.	were(n).	were(n).

444. These forms have remained substantially unchanged during all the periods of the English language.

An exception is to be made in the case of the second person singular, which, as is seen, is strictly *were;* and, in fact, *thou were* has been always in use in poetry. But the abandonment of vowel-change in the second person of the preterite of strong verbs naturally led to the general disuse of this form. As early, certainly, as the Middle English period the form *wast* had appeared, as the following extract from the Wycliffite translation of the Bible shows: —

Whanne sche hadde seyn Petre warmynge him, sche biholdinge him seith, And thou *wast*[1] with Jhesu of Nazareth.
Mark xiv. 67.

The way for this form had been previously prepared by the not unfrequent employment in Old English of *was* for the second person. Still it was not till the sixteenth century that *wast* came into much use. From that time on, it tended gradually to supplant the original form, especially in the language of prose.

445. But along with *were* and *wast* there sprang up, probably in the early part of the sixteenth century, a new form, *wert*, which apparently was developed after the analogy of *shal-t*, *wil-t*, and *ar-t*. This is met with frequently in the Elizabethan dramatists, and seems to have been then preferred by a few writers to *wast*. It has always been common in poetry. To that kind of composition it, like *were*, is in truth now mainly confined; but this may be due to

[1] Even here other MSS., as well as Purvey's recension, have *were*.

the fact that the second person itself of the verb is little used in prose.

446. The infinitives *wesan* and *bēon* occur not unfrequently during the Anglo-Saxon period. By the end of it the former had disappeared, and the latter came into so general use that it has given its name to the substantive verb. The same statement is true of the present participles *wesende* and *bēonde*, and the imperatives *wes* and *bēo*. In each instance the forms of *wesan* were early supplanted by those of *bēon*. None of these verbal roots exhibited a past participle during the Anglo-Saxon period. The existing form *been*, which originated in the Old English period, usually appeared for a long time as *y-be*, *i-be*, or simply *be*.

447. Dialectic and peculiar forms of the various parts of the substantive verb are to be found during all periods of its history. These it is neither possible nor desirable to enumerate here. One thing, however, is worthy of special mention. In some of the Northern dialects, *is* was early used for all persons of the present singular and plural, and *was* for the same numbers and persons of the preterite. Examples of such employment have been given in Chaucer's imitation of the speech of the North.[1] From that quarter *is* sometimes made its way into the language of literature, especially in the writings of the Elizabethan dramatists. The following examples from Shakspeare will illustrate the practice: —

[1] See page 120.

He does smile his face into more lines than *is* in the new map with the augmentation of the Indies.

Twelfth Night, act iii. sc. 2.

What manners *is* in this ?

Romeo and Juliet, act v. sc. 3.

This usage is very common, when the substantive verb is followed by its subject, and accompanied (generally preceded) by *here*, *where*, but especially *there*. With this last the singular verb seems to have been generally and perhaps universally employed in Elizabethan dramatic literature. For example : —

Thou think'st there *is* no more such shapes as he.

Tempest, act i. sc. 2.

There *is* tears for his love.

Julius Cæsar, act iii. sc. 2.

This method of expression has indeed lasted down to our own time, and is very common in colloquial speech.

448. A similar usage of *was* has been less prevalent,[1] but its employment in the plural with a personal pronoun as subject has been at times far more so. This is true at least of the second person, as used during the eighteenth century. *You was*, instead of *you were*, became then so common, that it seemed merely a question of time when the latter would disappear

[1] All things *was* quiet.
MORE, *Richard III.* (reprint of 1812, page 541).

altogether. The fashion of so employing it had pretty generally died out, however, by the end of the century. But even when the employment of *you was* prevailed, cases of the use of *was* in the first and third persons of the plural were exceedingly rare.

With the verb ends the foregoing brief survey of the changes that have taken place in the inflection of English. As a result of this examination, a few general inferences can be safely drawn. One of them is, that the history of language, when looked at from the purely grammatical point of view, is little else than the history of corruptions. The account contained in the preceding pages is largely a record of endings that have been dropped, or perverted from their proper use; of declensions that have been intermixed; of conjugations that have been confounded; of inflections in every part of speech that have either passed away altogether, or have been confused with one another, and consequently misapplied. There are but few forms in use, which, judged by a standard previously existing, would not be regarded as gross barbarisms. Terminations and expressions which had their origin in ignorance or misapprehension are now accepted by all; and the employment of what was at first a blunder has often become subsequently a test of propriety of speech.

Nothing of this need be denied or even questioned; all of it may be ungrudgingly admitted. But it is equally true that these grammatical changes, or

corruptions, if one is disposed so to call them, have had no injurious effects upon the development of the language; or if, in single instances, they have been followed by injurious effects, these have been more than counterbalanced by benefits which have been derived from other quarters. For the operation of these changes is merely on the outside. It is rare, indeed, that they impair, or even modify in the slightest, the real force of expression. It would now be looked upon as improper to say *I have shook* for *I have shaken;* yet, in the days of Shakspeare and Milton, the former was as allowable as the latter; and at this time all of us in a similar way use the preterite for the past participle in *I have stood*, or *I have understood*, and are not even conscious in so doing that we are guilty of what is, in strict grammar, a barbarism. Changes of a character such as the foregoing — and most changes are of this character — affect merely the garb of speech, not speech itself. To suppose that the English tongue has suffered any loss of strength, that it has entered upon a period of decline, because we now say, for instance, *stood*, where etymologically we ought to say *stonden*, is no evidence whatever of decay on its part: it is merely evidence of ignorance on our part of what constitutes the real life of language.

It is, at the present time, a fashion to talk of our speech as being in some way less pure and vigorous than it was in the days of Alfred; mainly, because then it had, on the one hand, fewer foreign words,

and, on the other, more inflections, more formative affixes, and therefore more capacity for self-development. But the test of the value of any tongue is not the grammatical or linguistic resources which it may be supposed to possess, it is the use which it makes of the resources it does possess. It is, on the very face, an absurdity to speak of a form of a language which has been made the vehicle of one of the great literatures of the world, which has been found fully adequate to convey all the conceptions of generations of illustrious men, as being inferior in power to a form of it, which, whatever its theoretical capacities, has embodied in its literature, as a matter of fact, little that is worth reading or remembering. As a mere instrument of expression, there is not the slightest question as to the immense superiority of the English of the nineteenth century over that of the ninth. It is equally proper to say that the former is just as pure as the latter, unless we restrict that epithet, as applied to language, to the narrow sense of being free from words that are not of native origin. Even in this respect there was no difference in the influences that operated upon the two forms of the speech; for the disposition to use foreign terms was just as potent in the Anglo-Saxon period as now, though the necessity for them was naturally far less pressing. No tongue can possibly be corrupted by alien words which convey ideas that cannot be expressed by native ones. Yet this elementary truth is far from being universally accepted; for it is a

lesson which many learn with difficulty, and some never learn at all, that purism is not purity.

Another inference concerns the assurance we may feel as to the stability of our speech derived from the influence, already immense and steadily increasing, of the language of literature. This is something that places tongues now in use in a position entirely different from that occupied by those employed in any previous period in the history of the world. The cultivated speech is with us no longer confined to a small class which an irruption of barbarism, or a social and political revolution, may subject to the sway of those who speak a foreign or a corrupt idiom. It is the language of vast communities, and, through the operation of manifold agencies, is daily growing in universality and power. The whole tremendous machinery of education is constantly at work to strengthen it, to broaden it, to bring into conformity with it the speech of the humblest as well as of the highest. Day by day dialectic differences disappear; day by day the standard tongue, in which is embodied classical English literature, is widening and deepening its hold upon every class. The history here given, brief as it is, shows how violent and extensive have been the changes that have taken place in our inflection since the ninth century; and yet, of those changes, how few in number and slight in importance are such as belong to the last three hundred years. If the social and political agencies now in being continue to exist, we may confidently expect that the language of the future

will never materially vary from what it is to-day. Movement there must be. That is an essential characteristic of a living speech. But while differences will be developed, they will not be important either in their nature or extent. Pronunciation may perhaps be most affected; but words and their meanings, grammatical inflections and constructions, are no longer likely to move away on any large scale from usage which a great literature has made more or less familiar to all, and to the readers and students and creators of which every generation adds a constantly increasing number. English, in the form which it has had essentially for the last three hundred years, may doubtless disappear; but its destruction, if it ever takes place, will be under conditions such as have never before existed, and will be owing to agencies which differ wholly from those that have brought about the ruin of any of the great cultivated languages of the past.

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INDEX TO WORDS AND PHRASES.

ABBREVIATIONS.

a.	= adjective.	*pers.*	= personal.
adv.	= adverb.	*phr.*	= phrase.
af.	= affix.	*pl.*	= plural.
art.	= article.	*pp.*	= past participle.
comp.	= comparative degree.	*p. pres.*	= present participle.
defec.	= defective.	*poss.*	= possessive.
demon.	= demonstrative.	*pr.*	= pronoun.
end.	= ending.	*pref.*	= prefix.
gen.	= genitive.	*prep.*	= preposition.
ger.	= gerund.	*pres.*	= present.
imp.	= imperative.	*sing.*	= singular.
imper.	= impersonal.	*superl.*	= superlative.
ind.	= indicative.	*v.*	= verb.
indef.	= indefinite.	*v.-phr.*	= verb-phrase.
inf.	= infinitive.	*v. pret. pres.*	= preterite-present verb.
interj.	= interjection.		
interrog.	= interrogative.	*vs.*	= strong verb.
irreg.	= irregular.	*vw.*	= weak verb.
n.	= noun.	*vs. vw.*	= verb, strong and weak.
neg.	= negative.		
num.	= numeral.	*vs(vw).*	= verb now strong, originally weak.
p.	= participle.		
pass.	= passive.	*vw(vs).*	= verb now weak, originally strong.
per.	= person.		

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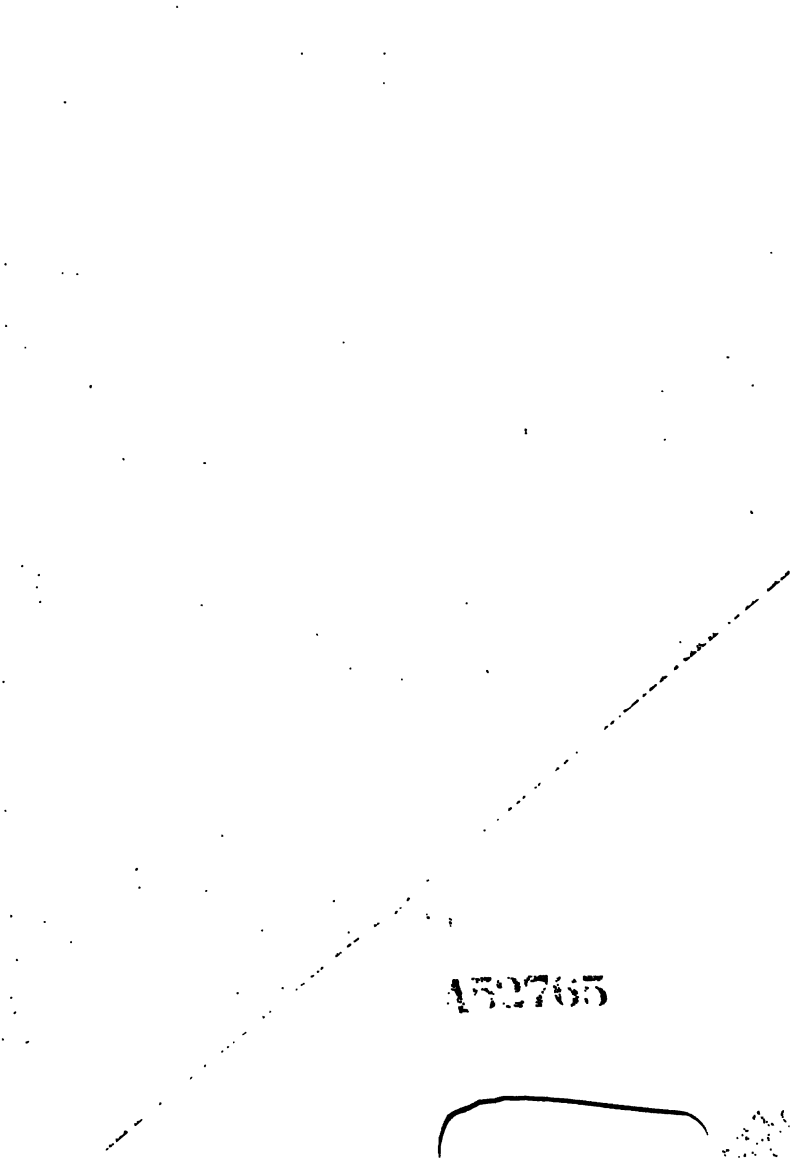
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